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JEAN BAPTISTE LE MOYNE,
SIEUR DE BIENVILLE.

MASTERS OF THE ART.

LE BAPTISTE LE MOYNE
SEUR DE BIENVILLE

BY

GRACE KING

EDITOR OF "MONSIEUR MOTTE," ETC.

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1892



JEAN BAPTISTE LE MOYNE,
SIEUR DE ROUGEMONT

○
"MAKERS OF AMERICA"
—

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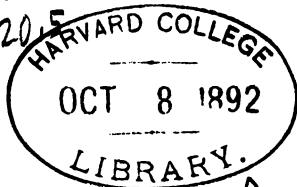
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TO
THE STUDENTS OF TULANE UNIVERSITY,
OF LOUISIANA,

This Record of the First Governor of the State

IS DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E.

THE circumscribed limits of this volume make a word of preface necessary for that general submission of authorities and credentials of which particular note could not be made.

Apart from official documents, Bienville has no bibliography, except the short account of him contained in the "*Histoire de Longueuil et de la Famille de Longueuil*," by Messrs. Alex. Iodoin and I. L. Vincent. It is to these excellent, painstaking compilers that we are indebted for the publication in book form of the only two unofficial documents of Bienville in existence, — a letter to his brother, and his will. Also, for much new and interesting information about Charles Le Moyne and his family. The authors explain the lack of fuller and more private details of this historical family by the destruction of their accumulations of papers in Montreal, in order to clear out a garret needed for the quartering of troops during the affair of the "Trent."

For official documents, recourse was had directly to the two separate transcriptions made from the originals in the Archives de la Marine, by M. Pierre Margry and

M. Magne, for the State of Louisiana, now in the library of the Tulane University of Louisiana. These, superadded to M. Margry's "Explorations et Découvertes," with his *résumé* of the times and circumstances contained in the introductory notes of the fifth and sixth volumes, form a clear and almost perfect documentary history of the French settlement of Louisiana. Use was made of the "Journal Historique" whenever dates and facts tallied with the above authorities. The rich historical French library of Tulane University, which contains all and more of the bibliography of Louisiana cited, furnished the general information.

The labours of an *archiviste* of Paris, employed to discover some traces of Bienville after his retirement to that city, were fruitless. The parish registers which might have given a clew to his residence were burned in the Hôtel de Ville in 1871. The registers of Montmartre Cemetery, which might have revealed the location of his tomb, are also missing.

No Louisiana historical question can be treated without tributary homage to the Hon. Charles Gayarré. It may be said that it is he, the former of the State Library, the devoted collector of archives and traditions, and, for half a century, the indefatigable explorer in colonial records, who has made intelligent work in Louisiana history possible to the present generation. Acknowledgment is made to him with sincere gratitude.

GRACE KING.

PARIS, April 5, 1892.

JEAN BAPTISTE LE MOYNE, SIEUR DE BIENVILLE.¹

CHAPTER I.

JEAN BAPTISTE LE MOYNE, the son of Charles le Moyne, écuyer, Sieur de Longueuil, and of Dame Catherine Primot, his wife, was born at Ville Marie, Canada, on the 23d of February, 1680, and baptized, according to the parish registry, the same day, having for godfather Jean le Ber, son of Jacques le Ber, and for godmother Marianne Jeanne de Carrion, daughter of Philippe de Carrion, Sieur du Fresnoy. He was the twelfth child and eighth son of his parents.

Charles le Moyne and Catherine Primot belonged to that sturdy emigrant stock which, yielding the Canadians the first and best fruits of French blood on American soil furnished a race of pioneers to the New World unequalled, if not unsurpassed, by any that its history chronicles.

When one says Canadian, one says Norman, and when one says Norman, one says Scandinavian. And for bold hardihood, valour, and endurance ; for dauntless

¹ Histoire de Longueuil et de la Famille Longueuil, par Alex. Iodoin et I. L. Vincent.

enterprise, persistent effort, and unextinguishable determination, — for all the rugged, crude essentials of primitive virility, these recrudescant adventurers loom up in the dawn of American settlement with the huge distinction and gigantic proportions of their Homeric ancestors. Without exaggeration it may be said, what France gained in America, she gained through her Normans ; what she lost, she lost in her own capital.

It was from the town of Dieppe that Charles le Moynes issued. He was the son of Pierre le Moynes and Judith Duchesne, and was baptized in the parish church of St. Remi de Dieppe on the 2d of August, 1626, receiving, it is carefully stated, the name of Charles from the honourable man, Charles le Douy, his godfather.

When he was about seven years of age, his parents moved from the parish of St. Remi to that of St. Jacques, — the patron saint of fishermen, — the quarter of the seafaring folk. Here they kept an hostelry.

Ever since the days of Champlain, Dieppe had been one of the busiest stations on the road from the Old France to the New. Through the little Norman seaport, as through a bunghole, gushed a constant stream of emigration, the overflow from the effervescent population inside. Its streets were thronged, its hostelrys crowded, by the outgoing, waiting for a bark, the incoming, for post-horses. Ship after ship loaded at its quay, — an overload generally of passengers aureoled in advance by the spectators not only with heavenly crowns, but with the more tangible ones of earth, namely, adventurers seeking a new chance at life, fame, and fortune ; merchants and scientists, grave with secret

theories of transatlantic finances and physics ; soldiers, Government appointees, priests, singly or in company with fervent bands of devotees, inflamed, if not inspired, to Christianize the distant savages out of the powers of hell and the devil.

It is easily conceived what the greedy ears and inquisitive eyes of a precocious lad would pick up in such scenes. It is not conceivable that an enterprising lad should hold back at such a time and such a place ; for under the impulse of the *Société de Ville Marie*, Dieppe was furnishing, not only the means, but the subjects for emigration from her own and neighbouring precincts. In 1641, at the age of fifteen, Charles Le Moyne, joining a band of his townspeople, shipped for Quebec, where a maternal uncle, Adrien Duchesne, had established himself some twenty years before. By taking service with the Jesuits, he opened his career in the New World with a shrewdness which testifies that he had profited by hearsay in the Old. The Jesuits sent him into the country of the Hurons, where he remained four years, at the end of which he received his pay, according to the journal of the Jesuits, — twenty crowns and his clothing. But the knowledge of Indian dialects and characteristics, and of the physical, moral, and commercial features of the country during this term of service, furnished the capital out of which he drew his prosperous future.

Le Moyne passed on to *Trois Rivières* in the multiple capacity of trader, soldier, and interpreter, — a combination of sails which could not fail to catch some breeze of fortune. The following year he entered into the service of the *Société de Ville Marie* on the then exposed and

frontier site of the present Montreal. His loyalty and courage, his skill and address in dealing with the Indians, his youth, strength, and spirit, are all faithfully transcribed by his patrons. He must indeed have soon made himself indispensable to the exalted pietists, who needed all the support of their visions and miracles to enable them to cope with such elements of evil as beset them round about in the bloodthirsty Iroquois and the hardly less cruel rigours of the Canadian climate. It is not surprising that in their acute need for such a servitor they should attribute his presence among them to the direct interposition of Providence on their behalf. But they did not limit their gratitude, nor remit Le Moyne's remuneration, to Providence. However much his daring with the Indians had commended him to their revenges, and however thick the crowns of saints and martyrs fell about him, his mundane shrewdness enabled him to avoid them, while his thrift worked out his pecuniary profit. At the age of twenty-eight he found himself not only celebrated in his small world on account of his fights and treaties with the Indians, but in addition the possessor of money and the proprietor of a rich concession, — consequently, in a position to marry. Such men marry well.

Catherine Tierry was the adopted daughter of Antoine Primot and Martine Messier, a worthy and well-to-do couple of the diocese of Rouen, who, responding to the call of the time, determined to devote their lives to the work of Ville Marie. Being childless, they obtained the one-year-old babe from her parents, and fetched her across the ocean with them in 1642, — one year after the emigration of her future husband.

The little one grew and thrived in the desperate conditions about her ; the crack of the gun, the terrors of Indian warfare, alternating, when there was an alternation, only with the sound of the church-bell and the ascetic enjoyment of devotion. She acquired the educational necessities of the period, and expanded into such virtue and modesty, according to the chronicle, such beauty of person and character, and such rich religious development, as made her at fourteen the most promising wife and mother in the settlement. Le Moyne asked her in marriage ; and in order, the chronicle says, to secure the preference over any other wooer, contracted by notarial act, dated Dec. 10, 1653, to marry her shortly after that date, putting up six hundred livres as forfeit-money. The adopted parents, no less anxious to secure so advantageous a son-in-law, guaranteed their good faith by a like amount. Monsieur Maisonneuve and Mademoiselle Mance, the spiritual father and mother of the settlement, signed their names, with other witnesses, to the paper. Events justified the estimation of all parties and the importance to the settlement of the event. The marriage was duly celebrated during the next six months ; it is recorded in the registry of the church of Notre-Dame, Montreal. A marriage so creditable to their nascent city received more than verbal approbation from the seigneurs of Ville Marie. Monsieur de Maisonneuve in their name presented the newly wedded ones with a concession of ninety arpents of land, between the St. Lawrence and Jean Saint-Père rivers, comprising Pointe Saint-Charles, — so named henceforth for Le Moyne.

The chronicle now proceeds, in a double column, to

itemize the ever-ascending account of financial and domestic prosperity. A few years after the marriage, the concession of the present seat of the family was obtained. It was erected into a seigneurie, and named Longueuil from the arrondissement in Normandy in which Dieppe stood, and in 1676 the letters of nobility were granted which made Charles Le Moyne Sieur de Longueuil.

None the less, soldier, trader, and interpreter, he extended the range of his activities and services from Ville Marie to the whole of Canada; and while figuring in every account of the Indian fights, treaties, and expeditions of the time, — wounded and captured also once, — he continued his shrewd financial ventures and acquisitions of land, accumulating that provision of fiefs and dowers which his ambition and foresight deemed necessary for his sons and daughters, — an ever-increasing list; Dame Catherine keeping up her tally well, of wife and mother, as she had promised.

Le Moyne died in 1685. His wife, bravely carrying on his business after him, survived him but five years. The inventory of the estate was princely for the period and place, — domains, silver, and commercial establishments. But it is not this, nor his title of nobility, that makes the Dieppe tavern-keeper's son important or interesting to us, it is that tally, the keeping of which was confided to Dame Catherine, — the list of sons and daughters, of whom it may be said, with a retrospective view of their good parental equipment of strength, sense, and effectiveness, that no marriage ever contracted within her limits had ever been so profitable to Canada as that of Charles Le Moyne and

Catherine Primot. Of the twelve sons, nine live distinguished in history, three were killed on the field of battle, and three became governors of cities or provinces. Their names are as follows: Charles, Sieur de Longueuil; Jacques, Sieur de Sainte-Hélène; Pierre, Sieur d'Iberville; Paul, Sieur de Maricourt; François, Sieur de Bienville I.; Joseph, Sieur de Serigny; Louis, Sieur de Chateauguay I.; Jean Baptiste, Sieur de Bienville II.; Antoine, Sieur de Chateauguay II.; François Marie, Sieur de Sauvole. There were two daughters. Catherine Jeanne married Pierre Puyen, Seigneur of Noyau, of the noble house of Chavuy, captain of marines and Chevalier of Saint Louis. She was the mother of the De Noyaus whose connection with their uncle De Bienville, and whose fortunes and misfortunes in Louisiana, are still the subject of local romance there. Marie Anne married the Sieur de la Chassaigne, captain in the marine, Chevalier of Saint Louis, and afterwards governor of Trois Rivières.

The subject of our biography, as has been seen, was but five years old when he lost his father; at ten he was completely orphaned. There are no childhood records of these men. Their history begins with their fighting majority, which they fixed themselves according to their spirit and their physical endowment; before this period it is a mere matter of dates. De Bienville himself says¹ that the only father he ever knew was his eldest brother, Charles, Sieur and later Baron of Longueuil, with whom he presumably lived before, and certainly after, their mother's death in 1690.

¹ Letter to the Baron de Longueuil, dated Louisiana, 2d Oct., 1713 (*Histoire de Longueuil*). This letter is given in full later.

This was the year in which the great fortress-château of Longueuil was finished, — the refuge and wonder of stateliness for the country round ; built all in brick and masonry, with walls and towers, guard-rooms and barracks, handsome church, farmyard, stables, sheepfolds, dovecotes, etc., decorated with all the insignia of nobility, as enumerated in the letter of Louis XIV. which conferred the title of baron on the possessor. Elevated by all the height of one generation above the humble class from which his father sprang, the second Sieur de Longueuil lived up to all the honours and duties of his position with the thoroughness of a descendant of the Crusaders. Not in the rough wars of Canada, but in the elegant campaign of Flanders, did he serve his apprenticeship as page of the Maréchal d'Humières. He had not only been to the court of the Great Monarch, but with his Indian attendant had figured there, as related by the Duchess of Orleans in one of her letters to her sister, the Countess Palatine Louise ; and he married no *bourgeoise* like his mother, but the daughter of a nobleman, Mademoiselle Claude Elizabeth Souart d'Adancourt, lady to her Royal Highness of Orleans herself.

It is unmistakably to this house and to these surroundings that Louisiana is indebted for that " *tendue de grand seigneur* " of her young Canadian governor which, however aggravating to his enemies, yet throws a quaint picturesqueness over his ambitions and character, — a picturesqueness kept fresh in the city he founded by occasional haphazards, bits of faded splendour belonging once to the Hôtel de Bienville, and by many a recorded ceremonial function and many a rhetorical phrase still

dimly brilliant in the dusty pages of official documents and private relations of the time.

In 1691, at the age of twenty-five, he was killed, gallantly fighting at Repentigny. The eleven-year-old Jean Baptiste was invested with the vacated title,—an investiture which comprised only the title, to judge from the stray remarks made from time to time by the inheritor of it. De Bienville, as he is henceforth called, intended to pursue his career upon the sea, following the example of his brothers D'Iberville and De Serigny, who were proving to the world that the Canadians were indomitable *coureurs de mer* as well as *coureurs de bois*. At seventeen he is mentioned as *garde-marin*, or midshipman, at Brest and at Rochefort, whence he must have sailed with Serigny's squadron, which carried to Iberville, then at Placentia, the orders and the reinforcements necessary to proceed once more against the English establishments of Hudson Bay. He says he served at the side of Iberville on this expedition. It is an expedition which French and Canadian historians love to recall,—a titanesque affair, where, amid all the grim terrors of the Polar regions, after fighting for three weeks with icebergs, separated from his fleet, the Canadian commander met, single-handed, three English vessels, out-sailed and out-manœuvred them, sank one, captured the other, and put the third to flight. Driven on the coast and shipwrecked by a tempest during the night, he saved himself, crew, and ammunition, but no provisions; the nearest lay under the English flag at Fort Bourbon. Starting out on foot to capture them, his belated fleet arrives, all proceed together to the fort, the English capitulate, and

once more the French flag takes temporary possession of the disputed region.

Bienville accompanied Iberville to France. While the latter was discharging his scurvy-stricken crew into the hospital of Port Louis, he was sent for by Maurepas ; the commission to discover and take possession of the mouth of the Mississippi was offered him. He accepted it as summarily as it was offered.

CHAPTER II.

THERE was no time to lose. The sharp eyes of the English were also turned towards the mouth of the Mississippi. The peace of Ryswick, which had liberated French enterprise, liberated theirs no less, and they were as eager to profit by the streak of calm which fell over European politics as their rivals over the Channel. A company had already been formed in London for the establishment of a colonial and trading post upon the banks of the great river; English vessels, loaded with Huguenot emigrants, it was confidently reported to Iberville, were on the point of sailing to take possession. The geographical prize was evidently to be to the swift. Minister and commander worked with a will. Orders from the former quickly followed, where they did not precede, requisitions from the latter. Two small frigates, the "Badine" and the "Marin," were overhauled, chartered, and refitted. Two of the stout Norman fishing-boats, called *traversiers*, were secured as transports. Crews were selected, and supernumeraries added by Iberville himself, — Canadians whom he knew, filibusters, Spanish deserters from Mexico, and Spanish-speaking Frenchmen. The usual stock-in-trade for Indian presents and barter, the provisions, the arms and ammunition, were all passed under the same keen eye, which could never tolerate the unforeseen in its horizon.

He made his preparations not only to arrive first at the goal, but to fight for it, should he come in second, and in either case to secure it and maintain it against all contestants. The expedition, thus fully and surely equipped, sailed from Brest on Friday, the 24th of October, 1698, at seven o'clock in the morning, Iberville leading, in the "Badine," the Comte de Surgères following in the "Marin;" the heavily freighted, slower-sailing *traversiers* lagging behind.

The voyage over the ocean was uneventful, except for the disappearance of one of the *traversiers* during a squall off Madeira. After a short search it was abandoned as lost, and the squadron continued without it. In less than six weeks the vessels anchored off Cape François, St. Domingo. Here the forced calm of the voyage was replaced by a bustling activity. Flour was made into biscuits, the casks were refilled with water, and one of the long-boats was taken out of frame and mounted.

The corvette "François," commanded by the Marquis de Chateaubriand, nephew of the great Tourville, reported now to Iberville for escort duty, according to the orders of the Minister of Marine; and the lost transport made her appearance, belated, but not otherwise injured from the squall.

During their short sojourn on land the crew paid the usual penalty of mortality to the heat, eating imprudences, and the deadly fever, there called Siam fever, which, Iberville wrote to the Minister of Marine, seemed to have a particular grudge against the Canadians and scriveners. The ranks were replenished, however, with filibusters, — a class of men (tropical Canadians they

might be called) to whom Iberville ever showed a strong inclination, and one well fitted for the enterprise in view.

Four English vessels had been observed cruising around. Prepossessed with the idea that they were on the same quest as he, Iberville pressed his provisionment to a rapid finish; and on the first day of 1699, the signals were flown from the "Badine" for the new start.

Favoured by good weather, but with the pestilential fever still aboard, the squadron made its way along the coast of Cuba, safely doubled Cape Corriente, gained the channel of Yucatan, and passing between Cape St. Antoine and Cape Catoche, dropped into the Gulf of Mexico.

As a general guide over the waters which had been the field of his career for twenty years, the governor of St. Domingo furnished Iberville with Laurent de Graff, one of the most noted filibusters of his time, one of the leaders in the celebrated expedition which had once taken Vera Cruz and held it for ransom.

By his advice Iberville directed the course of the squadron towards a fine harbour, discovered by a filibuster captain upon a time when, making for St. Domingo, he had been driven into the Gulf by contrary winds, — a harbour where the Spaniards were in the habit of going for masts, and which, it was rumoured, had been recently taken possession of by them, to prevent any other nation from establishing itself there.

According to Iberville's and his officers' calculations, this harbour should be found almost due north from where their vessels entered the Gulf, on the coast of

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Florida, somewhere between the river marked on their map as the Indias, and the Cabo de Sodo (Mobile Point), or about fifty miles west of the old Spanish possession of Apalache Bay, and about the same distance west of Mobile Bay. Iberville decided to look for the Mississippi in exactly the same location of the Espiritu Santo upon the early maps, and no doubt upon the two in his possession.

The ships sailed cautiously along, feeling their way with the lead, keeping a sharp lookout for the squalls — which, according to Spanish descriptions, make a hell of the Gulf of Mexico — and for the suspicious English vessels, experiencing nothing more disturbing than calms and sudden veerings of the wind, and seeing nothing more alarming than the flying-fish, the porpoises sporting with the ships under the beautiful blue waters, or the gulls foraging over the surface of them.

The officers took observations and compared notes, the men fished, the frigates heaving to from time to time for the lagging transports to catch up, and all lying by at sunset for the night. The afternoon of the twenty-third day, as the "Badine" was casting anchor for the night, land was sighted in the northeast. Iberville shouted to Surgères, on the "Marin," to crowd all sail towards it until sunset. At night the red glare of flames could be distinctly seen in that quarter, — prairies, the Canadians surmised, fired by Indians after buffalo. A long, low, half-inundated streak of land, running east and west, came into view with daylight. Nearer approach revealed shores of glistening white sand, a line of forest, a moderately sized stream, and behind all, far inland, the prairies still smoking from the night's conflagration.

The steering had been true to the point ; the fleet lay about south of Apalachicola Bay. The vessels anchored for the night off Cape San Blas, firing cannon, to attract the attention of any savages thereabouts.

With the morning, a systematic inspection of the coastline was organized ; Lescalette, the lieutenant of the "Badine," rowing in a barge close in, sounding and exploring every opening that presented itself, the frigates following as near in as their draughts permitted, the corvette remaining well out to sea.

The river marked on their map as the Indios was passed, and league after league slowly told off in the course westward, until Lescalette signalled, not only the discovery of the mouth of a river, but the portentous fact that there were masts of vessels in it. The French officers in haste assembled for council on board the man-of-war, whose guns, at the request of Iberville, gave the signal to anchor for the night. The frigates and transports, as usual, answered with volleys of musketry. The vessels in the distant port fired off their guns also, — a defiant menace it sounded to the French. Then a fog fell, and for hours both fleets were insulated in a common cloud of ignorance and disquietude. When it lifted, a white flag was seen flying from one of the masts in the harbour, out of which a sloop advanced half way towards the French, paused until they raised their colours, then returned. The Marquis de Chasteaumorant, elaborate in deferential politeness, and minute in his delicate regard for the susceptibilities of his Canadian commander, had omitted his pennant, and all marks of his superior rank from the "François." But as the "François" was the largest and best-armed vessel in the squad-

ron, and as the ships in the unknown harbour might be the English, Iberville requested the royal commander to display his colours again, which he did, thus assuming the *rôle* of commander-in-chief, for the nonce, of the expedition.

By daylight, Iberville sent Lescalette ashore to find out the name and nationality of the establishment, with careful instructions, however, not to reveal the destination or designs of the French. In order to furnish an excuse to enter the harbour, he was to represent that they were in need of wood and water, that the frigates were in search of a large body of Canadians reported to be on that coast, to whom they were conveying the king's order to return. The transports were to play the *rôle* of freebooters captured by the French, the corvette was to be accounted for as having joined them at St. Domingo upon the rumour that a pirate vessel of fifty or sixty guns was cruising about those waters.

And now the name of the young De Bienville is formally introduced into history by the three relations of the expedition. "My brother De Bienville," and "the young brother of M. d'Iberville," is henceforward generally well in front when there is a boat to be manned, a message taken, or an adventure attempted. He was sent with Lescalette to remain in the boat and prevent the crew having any communication with the garrison on land. They made their way without difficulty past the sentinel, although the orders were to let no strangers into the harbour. Lescalette landed, and was conducted to the major in command. During his absence, De Bienville, passing himself off as his valet, and speaking English, obtained from a Bayonnais such various informal items

as he judged might complete, establish, or refute official statements. Iberville received, on their return, a full budget from both.


The harbour was Santa Maria de Galvez de Pensacola. The Spaniards had been in possession but four months. The commandant was Don Andres de la Riola. The garrison consisted of about three hundred, the greater number galley-slaves and fellows picked up any way, from anywhere, — most of them at the time in irons. The frigates in the harbour, one of eighteen, the other of twenty guns, had fetched the colonists there, and were now ready to return to Vera Cruz, loaded with masts. They had taken the French squadron for the long-expected *armadillo* from Vera Cruz, and so had fired off their guns in salute of welcome. The country was miserable, the men were mutinous, and the officers dissatisfied. The entire establishment consisted of but shelters for the garrison, and a half-finished stockade fort on the left side of the mouth of the river.

A Spanish officer accompanied Lescalette on his return, the half-finished stockade fort firing a salute as they passed. Chasteaumorant, still acting the *role* of commander-in-chief, received the Spanish messenger, who brought the regrets of his commander that the French fleet could not be allowed to enter the harbour, as his establishment was a new and feeble one, but offering to have wood and water conveyed to them by his men and boats. As for refreshments, he was in greater lack of them than the French, being entirely dependent on Vera Cruz for them. He sent some present to the French commander, which Chasteaumorant returned with a demi-john of wine.

During their officer's absence the Spanish crew availed themselves of the opportunity to beg of the French the charity of some biscuit, as they were, they said, starving. They professed themselves anxious to serve the French king, and offered to desert to Chasteaumorant. He had food distributed to them, but warned them if they deserted he should be forced to return them to the Spanish authorities. He notes in his journal that judging by the way the Spanish officers ate when they dined with him, the story of their lack of food must be correct.

Their first pretext having failed, Chasteaumorant, in concert with, or more likely at the instigation of, Iberville, now wrote to Don Andres de la Riola that not considering the king's ships to be in safety where they were, he should proceed the next morning to sound the entrance to the harbour, so that he might know it, in case he should be forced to seek shelter there from a south wind. This was in fact thoroughly accomplished at daylight the next morning by Iberville, Surgères, and De Graff, who sounded up to the very frigates at anchor, before a note from the Spanish commander arrived, begging them to retire immediately, sending his own pilot to remain with them during their stay, and in emergency, to guide them into a place of safety, — any place on the coast was free to them except Pensacola. The French had their anchors raised ready to make the entrance, but they concluded instead, with reluctance, to relieve their anxious hosts and continue their voyage westward.

The beauty of the harbour, which was pronounced superior to Brest, the abundant forests of mast-timber, — “enough,” writes Surgères, “to furnish the whole of



France," — and the weakness and timidity of the Spanish garrison, rendered the temptation most seductive ; and the French commanders looked upon their decision as a most heroic piece of renunciation in favour of international good-will. As Chasteaumorant remarks regretfully, he could have driven the Spaniards out and secured the harbour very cheaply.

At the instance of the prudent Iberville, the marquis wrote once again to Don Andres, reiterating Lescalette's fiction about the object of the expedition. As for the real end of it, much additional general and confirmative information concerning it had been acquired during the hospitalities extended to the Spanish officers and the captains of the Spanish frigates. Don Andres' pilot especially, whom Chasteaumorant kept with him until the moment of sailing, gave instructions about the soundings, islands, and banks along the coast, which proved correct and valuable. All agreed that no English vessels had been seen anywhere about there. Whereupon, for the second time during the voyage, Chasteaumorant offered to relieve Iberville of his apparently unnecessary escort. The latter, however, as courteously declined being relieved, insisting that there might still be need for the corvette. According to his instructions from the Minister of Marine, Chasteaumorant had to continue with Iberville until dismissed in due form, — a condition imposed upon the minister by Iberville himself, mindful of his predecessor's, the unfortunate La Salle's experience with his royal escort.

Stopping of nights and during fogs, it took the squadron two days to arrive opposite the thin strip of land which half encloses Mobile Bay on the south.

Here they dropped anchor, and, with their usual methodical alacrity, set about taking observations and soundings; and here they experienced their first bad weather. Shifting gales, torrents of rain, terrific thunder and lightning, and violent seas, more than made good the evil characterization of the region by the Spaniards. The "François" put out to sea, the frigates withdrew from the coast, and one of the transports stranded (recovering at change of tide, however). The reconnoitring open boats returned from the channel with such unsatisfactory and contradictory accounts of the depth that Iberville determined to investigate it for himself. Taking with him his young brother, he was rowed by his Canadians to the point of the encircling strip of land, where he passed the night, to be on the spot to begin his task with the day. The storm broke over them here, raging with great violence. Daylight brought a lull which permitted them to sound and mark as far as the channel. Again the wind arose and the rain-floods descended; the thick mist shut off from them the light of their vessels. The rowers spent themselves in vain to make headway over the billows; they were forced to turn about and run into the nearest land, which they reached so weak and exhausted from their efforts that they could barely make a fire to dry themselves. Weatherbound here for three days, they had ample leisure to examine the narrow limits of their refuge, — a small island rising between the Gulf and the bay, about twelve miles long and one and a half broad at its widest. At the southwestern end a hideous heap of skulls and bones bore ghastly witness to some barbarity of Indian warfare, and not of

ancient date, as testified by the comparative preservation of the bones and freshness of the domestic utensils scattered around. The brothers named the place, from this event, Massacre Island. During their enforced sojourn here, the Canadians hunted, killing ducks, bustards, and wild cats. Iberville, making his way over to the mainland, about ten miles off, followed the shore-line some distance ; when, landing, he climbed to the top of a white-oak-tree and studied what his eye could reach of the scene around him, — a rugged forest-line, running beyond him still for ten or twelve miles north, where it seemed to form a cape turning westward ; the eastern bank of what, from the yellowish colour of the waters, he judged to be a river discharging itself into the bay ; oak, elm, birch, pine, walnut, chestnut, ash, and other trees unknown to him, rising in the forest around him. The land was high ; above inundation the soil bore quantities of vines and flowers, fragrant violets, novel yellow blossoms, and wild peas like those in St. Domingo. Proceeding still on foot, signs of Indian habitations presented themselves, — cabins, pieces of cooking utensils, remnants and vestiges not a week old ; presumably the encampment of some tribe on a seasonal visit to the Gulf shore for fish.

Before embarking for his island again, Iberville fired off his gun several times, and cut into the bark of a tree the fact and meaning of his presence there, — that he had come thither in three ships, fetching with him a calumet of peace.

Fine weather at last declared itself. The sounding of the channel was completed, and the retarded boats

returned to the ships, loaded with wood and with grass for the live-stock. At midday, under a light north wind, in the serene, exhilarating weather that such a wind brings to this region after a storm, the little fleet set sail again for the next station marked on the map, — which was no less than the Mississippi itself.

Mobile Point and Massacre Island diminished and disappeared behind them; before them, in the north-west and north-northwest, two other islands came into view, — mere specks of white sand, supporting a few trees, in the dancing, twinkling blue waters. Suddenly the fair wind changed to a shifting south, — the storm-wind of the Gulf. The wish to find a harbour becomes an anxiety, a pressing necessity; glasses are turned from the heavens to the Gulf north and west for the coast-line which should appear, but did not.

Bienville and Lescalette were sent to look for an anchorage around the western end of the island to the north of them, — marked on the early maps *Île à Bienville*, but from a sailor's losing his horn there in an after expedition, Horn Island, — but they were picked up the next day, tacking to get to windward of the island, after a fruitless search.

Other islands rose into view as they continued to sail westward, one in the west, and one in the south, — a mere sandy surface, without a tree. To get shelter from the wind, the ships anchored to the north of this last. It was named *Chandeleur*, from the recent feast of Candlemas.

Surgères, with his ensign, Sauvole, and Bienville were sent in a *Biscayen* to seek for a pass around the little island to the north, — now Ship Island; then named or

marked on the early maps Île à Surgères, or Île Lescalette. The felucca was also sent to reconnoitre around the dot of an islet to the west of it. It returned, bringing reports only of the quantities of curious little animals, resembling cats, found upon it. Of course they named it Cat Island ; but the cats were in reality racoons.

The weather, despite apprehensions, remained fine ; the ships rode at anchor all day, the men making astonishing catches of fish, and watching the innumerable flocks of wild duck and geese passing overhead.

At eight o'clock at night was heard the welcome voice of Bienville in his Biscayen, going from ship to ship, to communicate the good tidings that the sought-for anchorage had been found.

In the first light of the slow dawning February morning the "Badine" flew the signal ; and had there been any one there to witness it, — some wonder-stricken aboriginal, standing on the distant mainland and looking south, as, ray by ray, the sun drove the mist from the horizon, — white sails might have been seen to rise from the green, gray expanse, to widen, advance, converge, and file through the pretty opening between the two fragile, floating-looking islands ; and just where the eye is accustomed now to see the clustering of masts around the Government station, Iberville's fleet might have been seen to hover, drop anchor, and furl sail, — at last as safe as though in the envied Pensacola harbour.

CHAPTER III.

It was a harbour in which the French officers exultingly proclaimed they could find a shelter from every wind that blew.

The live-stock was landed,¹ tents were erected, and the rest of the long-boats taken out of frame and set up. The crews dispersed themselves enthusiastically over their glad possession, limited as it was in area ; and their exuberant indulgence in fish and bathing failed not to produce a prompt response in the shape of a mild epidemic. It was, in truth, an arid resting-place enough, — a mere strip of shifting white sand piled according to the fantasy of the last gale ; with a sparse wood at one extremity, and only grass enough to serve as ambush for that pestiferous torment of the feet, the needle-pointed burrs called “rocachats.” Over one beach dash the green, transparent billows from the Gulf, flashing their captive fish like spangles in the sunlight. Along the other, — the island has but two beaches, seamed together with a ridge of sand, — along the other, the blue waters of the Sound reveal their calm, transparent depths of beauty, their strange poetic growths of shell and weed, and

¹ The swine must have been put upon Cat Island ; for memoirs a few years later relate that the hogs upon Cat Island had destroyed all the “cats,” and had become so numerous that they preyed upon each other.

clusters of iris-hued anemones, their browsing, lurking, playing silver-fish, and brilliant darting crabs.

But despite its relief to Iberville, its harbourage blessing, its glorious phantasms of cloud and sea colouring, the little island has furnished but joyless scenes to history. Sun-baked, wind-swept, storm-driven, with a glare that sears the human eye to certain blindness, the Indians shunned it, the French learned to loathe it; once a place of most cruel imprisonment to thousands of unfortunate captives, from which hearts turned with horror, it is now serving as a national harbour, but a post of most wearisome residence to the Federal officials.

In sight of the mainland, with his squadron in security, and the Mississippi, according to his calculations, within reach of his open boats, and finally — and most potent reason — freed from all apprehensions of the English, Iberville felt that he might safely dismiss Chasteau-morant. The marquis, dining with him on the “Badine,” was therefore courteously informed that whenever it was his pleasure to return to St. Domingo, he was at liberty to do so. The actual departure of the “François,” however, did not take place for several days, during which the hospitalities and social amenities of the two commanders continue to throw a pleasant and genial glow over their official relations.

Moving figures of men could be made out on the distant shore, and at night the light of camp-fires shone on what appeared to be the end of an island lying close to land. Iberville lost no time in making his investigation, determined to make friends with the Indians, who, as he had understood at Pensacola, entertained a horror of the Spaniards. He took Father Anasthase Douay, a

former companion of La Salle, with him in his Biscayen. Bienville and two Canadians followed in canoes. It was a distance of about twenty miles to the land. Disembarking, Iberville and the priest found the fresh trail of the Indians seen from the ships. They pursued it. Bienville and the Canadians paddled along close to the shore in the shallow water; the Biscayen followed in the distance. Night overtook them after ten miles, and they camped where they were. In the early morning they espied the lurking forms of Indians watching them from afar. Leaving behind at their camp some hatchets, knives, beads, and vermilion as a bait, and also as testimonials of his good-will, Iberville and his party pursued the trail they were on. It led them, after a few miles, near enough to the little island for them to distinguish canoes filled with Indians crossing between it and the mainland (Deer Island, named for the game found on it, and Biloxi). Bienville in his canoe immediately started towards them. The Indians, taking — Iberville writes — the Frenchmen for Spaniards, fled in terror; leaping to the land, running into the forest, abandoning their canoes and all that they contained. The Canadians tried in vain to head them off or arrest them by their friendly cries. They came upon one poor creature unable to escape, — an old man lame from a putrefying wound in the leg. The Canadians made signs to him of their friendly intentions. He responded with signs also that he was suffering cold and great pain, and petitioned to be carried ashore. This his captors willingly did, making besides a fire for him, wrapping him in a coverlet, and building a shelter over him. They also gave him food and tobacco, drew his canoe upon

the beach in sight, placed his sacks of corn round him, and withdrew, making him understand that they were going to pass the night at some distance from him.

In the mean time Bienville, with two Canadians, had been sent into the forest in chase of the fugitives. They returned with an old woman found hiding. She was in great terror, says Surgères, thinking that her last hour had come. But her trepidation was allayed by friendly signs and a present of enough tobacco for herself and her whole family. She was conducted to the old man, and made to see the evidences of the good will and generosity shown him by the strangers, who still further proved their kindness by leaving the two old creatures by themselves together.

As Iberville anticipated, the woman slipped away during the night, carrying her present and the recital of her experiences to her people. As for the poor old man, he had fared hardly; the grass around him had caught on fire, and he had with difficulty saved himself from being burned alive. The Canadians extinguished the flames and laid him on a bearskin, where he expired a half hour afterwards.

The results of the old woman's good offices were soon seen, or rather heard. The unmistakable sounds of Indian vocalization were heard approaching through the woods. But timidity, apparently, or distrust took possession of the singers, who would not venture from behind the trees. The eager Frenchmen waited impatiently and in vain for the embassy, and finally returned to their camp. Some Canadians, hunting in the woods, later met the still hesitating Indians, and reassured them into resuming their procession and calumet chant.

Iberville received them with their own expressive greeting of endearment, — a gentle rubbing of the stomach, — distributed presents among them, conducted them to their abandoned canoes of the day before, showed them their corn intact, and finally feasted them on sagamity. The good cheer enticed other laggards and spies from the woods, and good fellowship was not long in establishing itself. Two old women were immediately put to pounding corn for the return feast, given promptly by the Indians. All the whites and reds were smoking together afterwards, the Indians calling their guests allies, and teaching them words of their dialect. Night separated them; each race going to its own encampment, several miles apart. The next morning, however, when, in pursuance of their good fellowship, the Canadians sought the camp of their friends, struggling painfully through swamp and thicket to get there, they found but ten clouted warriors, warned by the signal shot of the Canadian scout, waiting for them, arms in hand. The rest of the tribe had all departed, prudently taking their canoes and corn with them.

Iberville complains in his journal that notwithstanding he never smoked, he had to smoke all over again with them. More presents were distributed among them, and Iberville was able to persuade three of them to accompany him to his ship, leaving Bienville and two Canadians behind as hostages. The weather was very beautiful, and a quick sail was made to the ships at anchor. The chief, standing in the Biscayen, intoned his chant of peace as they approached. On board, the savages were regaled with all that their experienced hosts could suggest for their beguilement. Presents were made them, the ships

were put through their manoeuvres, cannon were fired off, and spy-glasses held to their eyes,—the last the strangest wonder of all to them, they could see so far off with one eye, and so near with the other at the same time! French brandy, burning in their stomachs so long after it was swallowed, also greatly astonished them. Chasteaumorant writes that they were well-made, robust men; that he made them several questions by signs, but that they answered, like veritable hogs, with grunts. They belonged to the Annochy and Moctohy tribes. They described their village, and the neighbouring village of Chozetta, as being not more than three days' journey from the ships, on the banks of the Pascagoula River, which they assured Iberville was four fathoms deep, begging him to fetch his ships into it.

Iberville could find out from them nothing about the Mississippi. Of the Indian tribes mentioned in the Tonty and Hennepin Relations of La Salle's voyage down the Mississippi, he could get no trace, with the exception of the Nipissas, whom he identified with the Quinipissas,—located, however, by the Relations twenty-five miles up the river, while these Indians placed them only nine miles away.

Iberville returned with his savages to the mainland, where he found Bienville feasting, smoking, and otherwise making himself agreeable to some newly arrived guests. These were, indeed, of importance. They were a chief and warriors of the Mongoulachas and Bayagoulas tribes, who lived on the banks of the Mississippi itself. On a hunting expedition they had heard the sound of the cannon, and had come to see the cause of it. They lavished compliments and caresses on the

young Bienville, asking him if he had come there in the bark canoe they saw, and if he belonged to the people up above the Mississippi, which they called the Malbouchia. The chief advanced to meet Iberville, with all the dignity and ceremony of his rank and people, passing his hand over the commander's stomach and raising his eyes to heaven, which demonstrations, Iberville writes, were punctiliously returned. When similar protestations and attestations had been indulged in by all, they repaired to Bienville's tent. Here Iberville presented his calumet to them to smoke, — a most imposing pipe, made of iron in the shape of a ship, decorated with beads and flying the *fleur de lys*; giving them also hatchets, knives, and other presents, that, as he told them, they and the French henceforth should be but one nation. A festal dish of sagamity, confected with prunes, was served, and brandy, which the Indians enjoyed burning rather than drinking.

At night the Indians gave their feast, smoked and smoked their calumet, and made their presents of skins of the musk-rat, which, according to them, allied the French with the four nations west of the Mississippi, — the Mongoulacha, Ouacha, Tontymacha, and Lagneschieto; and with the Biloxi, Mactohy, Houma, Pascagoula, Sechluel, and Alnico, on the east of it. The feasting, singing, and dancing — Canadians no whit behind the Indians in the two latter — lasted until midnight.

These Indians also gave Iberville to understand that they hated the Spaniards. They were at that time at war with the Quinipissas, who they knew had fought with La Salle. Among their allies, the Houmas and the Tangipahoas were both named in the Relations of La

Salle's exploration of the Mississippi. Feeling the end of a guiding thread, indeed, in his hand, Iberville drew some maps to learn where that fork of the river was, through which the Relations averred the explorers had travelled to the Sound. The Indians seemed to indicate this to be the Pascagoula River; but reflection convinced Iberville that what they meant was that it was through that river they themselves reached streams that communicated with the Mississippi.

Iberville proposed going directly to the mouth of the Pascagoula and sounding it, Bienville and three Canadians, with their canoes, remaining with the Indians.

The chief, however, wished to continue his hunt after buffalo and wild turkey; but he promised to return to the spot in four nights to meet the French, when he would share his game with them, and they would all have a feast and proceed together to the Mississippi. He would light a fire on the shore to signal his return; Iberville was to answer with four cannon shot from his ship. Upon this they parted, the French turning their sloops and canoes in the direction of Pascagoula River. Contrary winds, however, prevented their making it. Judging from its size and appearance that it could not possibly have the depth of water described, at its mouth, Iberville, without further waste of time, put back, hoping to catch the Indians before they had started on their hunt, and persuade them to guide him at once to their branch of the Mississippi. But the Indians had departed, and their camp was deserted. Nothing remained for Iberville but to camp for the night where he was, and return the next morning to his ships and await the return of his guides. Twelve hours later, — a day too soon

for the appointment, — smoke was descried at the point of rendezvous. The four cannon shots were fired, and preparations immediately begun to fit the Biscayens with men, food, and ammunition for the exploration of the river. Iberville, Bienville, Surgères, Lescalette, and all the Canadians of the "Badine" and "Marin" were of the party. Arrived at the place of meeting, not an Indian was to be seen, and the woods, having caught fire from the beacon, were all in flames. A stormy north wind the next day made navigation impossible. When it subsided, Bienville was sent in his canoe to search for news of the absentees. He returned with two men and two women,—one of the men an Annochy friend. He told Iberville that the Bayougoulas had gone home. They had stayed on their hunt only two nights after parting from the French. They had kindled the fires to show that they were leaving, being out of provisions, and with the wind favourable for reaching the Malbouchia. In other words, they had given him the slip. Sending a party to sound and explore the Pascagoula, Iberville returned to Ship Island, without a vestige left of any hope he may have founded on the Indians.

Getting into the Mississippi by one of its outlets, following it down to its mouth, fixing the exact locality of it, and then rejoining his vessels in the Gulf, would have been to Iberville a task of most easy and expeditious accomplishment. Thrown now upon his own resources, he pushed forward, with energies stimulated by his recent baffling, his original and more difficult plan.

In less than twenty-four hours the new expedition was under way. The two barges, armed each with a swivel-gun, and with a canoe in tow, were equipped, with fifty

Canadians, sailors, and filibusters, twenty-five days' provisions, and arms and ammunition not only for the voyage, but for the projected establishment at the mouth of the river, when found. Iberville took Bienville with him in one barge. Sauvole, the ensign of the "Marin," commanded the other barge, having with him Anasthase Douay, the priest who, as the companion of La Salle and a former explorer of the river, was expected to establish its identity.

Surgères remained in command of the fleet at Ship Island, with permission, as he was short of provisions, to return to France in the "Marin," in six weeks, if Iberville had not returned.

It was the morning of Friday, the 27th of February, they set out. The weather was unfavourable, the wind blowing from the southeast, with rain and fog. They sailed for some islands that appeared in the south. Running six leagues, the length of one of them, a low, flat, rush-covered surface, called by Iberville Sable, or Sand Island, they entered that terraqueous maze of the Delta through which the mind follows their adventures with admiring confusion. Islands, islets, sand-bars, reefs, points, bays, shallows, breakers, gravel-banks, and mud-heaps repeat themselves in Iberville's diary with a regularity which, however, cannot be called monotonous.

Despite the wind, the water presented a calm, unruffled surface, protected as it was by a continuous screen of islands rising in clusters, budding in long sprays, as it were, from the shallow bottoms, reaching from northeast to southwest.

Beyond, far out in the open, the eye could touch the

Chandeleurs ; and beyond them, from out the invisible, the ear could gather the roar of breakers over still other islands.

The mainland lay to their right, — a shelving strip of woodless sand, scooped, notched, and ragged, reaching out into the water. In order to pass no river it might hold, the barges kept it well in sight ; dragging at times laboriously over the shoaling bottom. They passed their night on the point of an island, inundated at high tide, like the rest.

The next morning, a fog, through which they could not see, hid everything from them. The day was consumed, as one narrative says, in fending off the little islands that beset their way wherever they turned. They made a short halt for rest on ground so fragile that it trembled if a heavy object was dropped upon it ; they tried the oysters here, but found them not so good as those in Europe. In the afternoon, while they were pitching their camp for the night, a dreadful storm broke over them, with deafening thunder-claps and blinding flashes of lightning, and a deluge of rain that lasted all night and prevented a start in the morning. Suddenly the wind jumped to the northeast, and bore down upon them with freezing keenness. They had no wood ; they dug in vain in the sodden sand for drinking water. The water rose all around them, covering the island and their camp a half foot deep. They cut twigs and rushes, and raised a standing place, where, during the drenching downpour, they hung over a smouldering fire. And so their Sunday passed.

On Monday they were able to make a start. The wind blew stiffly from the north. Running before it,

they pushed alternately to the east and west, seeking some issue out of the maze that held them. Struggling around a point, they came in sight of the mainland again, still extending south-southeast before them ; and still they followed it.

The unbridled wind had now free range at them. The raging seas broke over and over their open boats, badly weighted with the canoes which they had been forced to take aboard. They stretched their tarred canvases, and held them down by main strength. At one moment they were running with the wind into land, fearing in the storm to pass the Mississippi by. At another, they were fighting with the wind to keep off the land against which it and the sea were driving them ; every gust threatening to beach them, every billow to swamp them. For three hours they battled for their lives off a cape whose jutting rocky points seemed to cut off all hopes of escape. Darkness was coming on. The irresistible fury of the gale showed no sign of abatement. There seemed no choice but that of perishing at sea, or perishing on shore during the night. Iberville seized the one mitigation of waning daylight for himself and his men. Sauvole saw him put his barge about, with the wind full astern, and drive her on the rocks. He followed, and the mouth of the Mississippi was discovered !

4

CHAPTER IV.

THE impregnable cape separated before them into little hillocks. The threatening rocks that seemed to have risen from the deep to aid the fury of a merciless gale, revealed themselves to be the simulations they were, — weird, jagged, fantastic, the outstretching limbs and branches of massed heaps of driftwood, cemented by slime and sediment, and hardened by the elements ; the huge forest wreckage which the serried currents of the mighty stream had borne down and tossed there, to picket its encroachments upon the Gulf ; the far-famed, well-named Palissadoes, which had hitherto barricaded entrance from the sea. A turbid volume of whitish waters charged through the openings, holding its way, unmixed, unmixing, far out through the clear green waters of the Gulf. The Frenchmen tasted it, — it was fresh, “and great consolation it gave them,” Iberville says, “in the consternation they were in.” The words of the great La Salle came back to him, — that he would recognize the waters of the Mississippi by their being whitish and thickish, and by their not mixing with the waters of the Gulf.

Advancing into one of the three openings that offered, the boats were almost wrecked again in the surf which crested over a sand-bar, sighted too late. The stream became thicker and whiter, and the current so swift that even

with the wind now in their favour, the sails could make poor headway. The sea tossed and foamed outside the two low smooth tongues of land, not a musket-shot from edge to edge, which banked the river from it; not a tree, only grasses and rushes, the tenuous first growth of a recent soil, falling in heavy fringes over into the current, which stretched and pulled them along in its course. Then, by degrees, firmer ground and heavier growth. When the boats landed for a camp, the eye could not penetrate, nor the foot separate, the thick growths that confronted them. A space was cleared, fires were lighted, the frugal supper of porridge was cooked and eaten, and watches were set for the night; Canadians and filibusters alternating with the sailors.

His day's work over, the hardy leader gives a sigh of satisfaction. "We feel, stretched upon these rushes, sheltered from the bad weather, all the pleasure there is in seeing one's self safe from an evident peril," exulting with robust virility: "C'est un mestier bien gaillard de decouvrir les costes de la mer avec des chaloupes qui ne sont ny assez grandes pour tenir la mer souz voiles, ny à l'ancre, et trop grandes pour donner à une coste plate, où elles eschouent et touchent à demylieue au large." "It is gallant enough work discovering the shores of the sea in barges not large enough to keep to sea with either sail or anchor, and too large to land on a flat coast, where they strand and touch a half league out."

The next morning it was Mardi-Gras morning: they celebrated mass, chanted the *Te Deum*, and for the third time a cross was raised¹ in that chaos of strug-

¹ The first time by La Salle, when he explored the river to its mouth; the second time by Tonty, who journeyed to meet his

gling land and water. The wind and rough water prevented soundings or explorations, which were deferred until the return trip, and perhaps a happier chance of weather. After breakfasting "very succinctly," the Relation says, — for either through prudential motives of economy, or from loss of provisions during the storm, Iberville had shortened the rations, — they took to their boats again, and steered up the river.

It spread out before them into a broad expanse, from which two other issues, in the southeast and southwest, branched out towards the Gulf. Crossing the exposed space, a squall struck them, which dismasted one of the barges. It was forced to go into shore for repairs, at a spot where the men found quantities of almost ripe blackberries.

Above these branches, or passes, the river began to converge again, and the banks gradually to change their character. Sedges and rushes passed into cane and willows, which increased in height and sturdiness until they filled forests. Ducks, sarcelles, and bustards started from cover before them. They saw a stag wolf running along the bank, an opossum, and in the forests the Canadian hunters discovered abundant tracks of deer, goats, and wild bees.

Twelve leagues from its mouth, the river made a bend to the west. Here they stopped for the night. A little bayou ran near by; they named it Mardi-Gras, for the

old commander at the mouth of the river when the latter met the tragic end of his hopes in Matagorda Bay. Tonty found the original cross prone, half buried in sediment. He erected it higher up the river, on firmer soil, as he supposed. Iberville found no traces of it.

day. The cannon were fired off, for the intelligence of any Indians within hearing. Iberville climbed to the top of a tree to spy out the country about him. Nothing but willows, canebrakes, and thickets were to be seen, over a flat land, that overflowed four feet deep in high water.

If this was the Mississippi, according to the journals of the La Salle party given him for his guidance, Iberville should find, forty leagues up the river, on the left bank, the deserted village of the Tangipahoas, the cabins of which, in La Salle's time, were filled with corpses. Two leagues above the Tangipahoas should be found the Quinipissas; and forty leagues above these, a division or fork in the river, La Fourche des Chetimachas. Thence to the Coroas should be six leagues; to the Natchez, ten; to the Pensas, twelve; to the Arkansas, eighty. The itinerary seemed plain, and by authority accurate. He prepared to follow it.

But a more unreliable, confusing set of guide-books he could not have had, as will be seen. The collection consisted of that version of the priest Zenobe Membré's account of the La Salle expedition contained in the second volume of Le Clerc's "*Etablissement de la Foi*;" the priest Hennepin's plagiarism from the same, contained in his spurious *Relation*, and an account by Tonty, which the latter afterwards personally disowned to Iberville. On Ash Wednesday morning, mass was duly celebrated, ashes were distributed, and a cross was erected. In default of wind, the journey proceeded by oars.

The land began to rise perceptibly; the overflow, according to the tally kept by the bark of the trees, decreasing to a foot and a half. From the usual post

of observation, a tree-top, a sheet of water behind the right bank could be seen running in the same direction as the river.¹ Over on the opposite side was a forest of different shades of green, in some places a mere seam, in others a quarter of a league wide, behind it, prairies dotted with tufts of foliage.

Drift began to load the rising currents. No signs of inhabitants were visible, except some ferries, moored to the bank, — bundles of cane pointed at both ends, fastened together by cross pieces of wood. Every morning each camping-place was marked by a cross and cuts in the bark of trees. Every evening the cannon were fired ; but the reverberating echoes, tossed from bank to bank, awoke no hearers, no responders. Canadians were kept hunting for game, to eke out the ever-decreasing rations. The journals make note of great alligators pursued, sometimes killed and cooked, — and not unpalatable meat when liberated from its musk.

The travelling was slow and laborious, mostly by oars. A different wind was needed for each bend in the river, and the river boxed the compass once, if not twice, a day. The water continued to rise, the drift to increase. The reinforced currents tore irresistibly round the bends, driving the helpless boats out of their course, until the men learned to hug to the bank in the quieter waters, while Bienville, scouting ahead in his, acted as *guidon*. Fires in the distance, a discarded cracked canoe (not of bark, but burned out of the whole log) showed that they were creeping upon human life. Quantities of blackberries now lined the banks, but no fruit or nut trees yet enriched the forest. The trees

¹ Lake Borgne.

grew handsomer, the foliage richer, vines, already passed the blossoming, hung in festoons heavy with promise of grapes. The land overflowed still, but slightly, only eight or ten inches deep. The hunters killed a wild beef, many of which were seen.

Five days passed. With diminishing food, and increasing difficulties of driftwood and current to contend with, still nothing was to be seen ahead but the half-submerged trees which the tawny waters bore down upon them, and nothing on land but the occasional lethargic alligator, or chance glimpses of more attractive game, the men began to show fatigue and discouragement.

At last, one morning, turning a bend, they came in sight of two Indians paddling a pirogue; but in great alarm, the savages made for the woods and escaped. A gunshot farther on, five more pirogues of Indians were seen. This time, landing below them, Iberville approached them on foot. All fled to one warrior. Him Iberville greeted and embraced in the Indian manner; and sending his own men and boats out into the middle of the stream, he persuaded him to recall his companions. This the Indian did, by chanting a peace-song. A small gratuity of trifles allayed the suspicions and secured the good will of the Indians. They belonged to the Annochy tribe. Inquiring after his Bayougoula friends, Iberville was told a tantalizing bit of information that they had returned to their village by a little stream that ran from the Mississippi into the Sound. Iberville asked to be guided to this village; but the Annochy declined to interrupt their hunt. A hatchet, however, bought the services of one.

The exhausted larders of the barges were replenished

with meat, the Indians gladly availing themselves of the opportunity to trade away their necessities for French trumpery. One old fellow, in particular, spread out his entire stock of dried beef and bear's meat ; and sitting behind it in market style, bargained the whole of it away — a hundred pounds — for two knives. As the Indians had not heard the cannon, one was shot off for their edification. They threw themselves to the earth in transports of fear and astonishment at such a terrific exhibition of power.

That night the camp was pitched on the right bank of the river, — according to Iberville's calculations, about thirty-five leagues from its mouth. Near by was a small deserted Indian village or camp, — ten or more cabins thatched with straw, — and on a point of the river's bank, what seemed to have once been a kind of stronghold, a small fortification of canes and saplings the height of a man, enclosing an oval space fifty feet long and twenty-five broad, in which were a few huts. Both banks in this locality were almost impassable, on account of the canes, which grew to a prodigious height and thickness. The guide took Iberville six leagues above this stopping-place (about the location now of the city of New Orleans), and showed him the Indian portage between the river and the bay — as the Indians called it — in which the French ships lay. It was then widely strewn with baggage of parties going and returning, over which pirogues could be easily dragged. To demonstrate how short it was, the guide himself took a package from the river to the lake (Lake Pontchartrain) and returned.

The weather changed from oppressive heat to oppressive cold ; but the only change in the river was another

increase in its rapidity and crookedness. The rowers pulled six miles to advance one, and averred that to get around a bend they crossed the stream four or five times. While they were camping on the right bank of the river during an idle day caused by rain, some of the men went out hunting, and two Breton sailors belonging to the "Marin" were lost. Cannon were fired at intervals during the night to guide them to camp, and at daylight four men were sent into the woods to search for them, directed by Iberville to fire their guns occasionally as they advanced. When they returned, after a fruitless tramp, Iberville sent out another party of eight men, with compasses, starting each in a different direction, with provisions, in case they found the wanderers, forbidding them to return to the camp until the cannon signalled them. The barges were ordered up and down the river to scan the banks. All in vain; no trace or sound of the unfortunates could be gathered, and the expedition sorrowfully had to abandon and proceed without them.

The next afternoon they passed a little stream about two hundred paces wide, flowing into the river from the west. The guide called it the River of the Ouachas (now Bayou Plaquemines). A league and a half beyond, they met two pirogues filled with Indian men and women. These turned out to be Ouachas and Bayagoulas. After trading what corn they had to the Frenchmen, the Ouachas continued their journey to their village, two days distant, while the Bayagoulas turned back to announce in theirs the approach of visitors. The French landed, set up an iron mill they had with them, and ground their acquisition of corn. Their flour

was gone ; they had very little bread left. With the ground corn they made sagamity, — hominy seasoned with salt pork ; and this formed their diet, with water, for the brandy was exhausted.

At half past six o'clock the next morning they were on their way to the landing-place of the Bayougoulas ; and nerved by the prospect of rest and refreshment, the men rowed their best and with a will.

A league below the landing, a pirogue met them, with a delegation of Bayagoulas and Mongoulachas, singing, and brandishing a calumet three feet long, brilliant with its decoration of coloured feathers. Passing from one barge to the other, they presented it, on the part of their tribes, to the white men to smoke ; after which the calumet-bearer stationed himself in the prow of Iberville's boat, from which he brandished his symbol of peace, and chanted his song to the assemblage of his people waiting on the bank. As Iberville stepped from his boat, he was taken by two warriors, who, gently supporting him under the arms, led him to a cleared space, spread with bear-skins, where the chief sat in state, surrounded by warriors and women, — a mark of confidence. Sauvole, Bienville, and the priest, received with the same cordiality, were also led forward with the same ceremony. Resting on two forked sticks, in the very centre of the meeting-place, guarded by a warrior who never left it nor took his eyes off it, Iberville beheld the brave calumet which he had presented to the Indians on the sea-shore, — the miniature ship, with the *fleur-de-lys* banner.

After much smoking, the priest only feigning to smoke, sagamity, cooked with soft red beans, was passed around,

with various kinds of corn-bread, pones baked in ashes, and different cakes made of fine corn-flour, enough not only for the officers, but for the whole expedition. Iberville gave the usual largess in the shape of presents, adding a treat of brandy weakened with water, — of which, however, the Indians partook sparingly, finding it rather ardent for their uncivilized stomachs.

The Mongoulacha chief, described as “a man of inconceivable pride, never laughing, staring fixedly before him all the time,” wore a garment which was like a light in the wilderness to the Frenchmen, — a coat, or capote, of blue Poitou serge. In response to the eager inquiries about it, he said it had been given to him, in passing, by the “Iron Hand,” Tonty, of whom he related confirmatively many incidents, partly by signs, and partly in his own language. Iberville says that he could understand the words he took down in writing on the sea-shore, but that his brother Bienville, who had kept the guide with him in his canoe, had learned the language so well that he could understand everything in it, and speak it passably.

The La Salle Relations spoke of the river's dividing into two channels, and said: “We followed the channel to the right, although we had intended taking the other, but passed it in a fog without seeing it.” Iberville, who wished to descend by this channel, or fork, on the right, to the sea, and thus acquaint himself with all the outlets of the river, catechised the Indians about it. But he could hear nothing of it from them. They maintained that the Mississippi neither forked nor branched, and that Tonty had passed by them both going to and returning from the mouth.

Iberville could not square this at all, he says, with the accounts in the Relations, especially with that of the Récollet Hennepin, whom he thought himself more particularly obliged to trust.

The Indians drew a map of the country to demonstrate how Tonty had passed from them to the Houma. As for the deserted pillaged village of the Tangipahoas, their village had never been on the banks of the Mississippi. They had formed one of the seven tribes of the Quinipissas whose villages the Houma had destroyed, adopting the survivors into their own tribe, where Iberville could see them.

The doughty heart, which had been equal to any enterprise, however perilous, sank before such discrepancies and contradictions. He was, as he says, in a very embarrassing situation: one hundred and ninety leagues away from his vessels, his provisions exhausted, his men spent with their strenuous and constant toil up stream; with his establishment still to locate, and Surgères behind him, with orders to return to France in six weeks. "Always," he writes, "coming back to the Relation of the Récollet father, not being able to believe him so unworthy as to make a false statement to the whole of France," although he knew that the priest had lied oft and arrantly in his accounts of Canada and Hudson Bay.

There was also, of course, the suspicion that the Bayagoulas, out of fear or jealousy of the Quinipissas, might be deceiving him.

He was convinced that if he put back from where he was, without further proof that Tonty had passed by there, and that he, Iberville, was in the Mississippi, it

would not be credited in France that he had been there, in face of the contradictory Relations. There seemed nothing for him to do but to push on to the Houma, — still five days' journey farther off up the river.

During his cogitations, the afternoon sped in feasting, singing, and dancing. At nightfall the Indians took their departure for their village, about a mile inland, on the high land, making a brilliant procession, holding blazing fagots of cane in their hands to light their way. The French promised to visit them the next day.

By daylight a deputation of them was back again, singing, and bringing the precious calumet, which when off duty was carefully kept in a leathern bag. The ceremony of smoking it over, it was again deposited on the forked sticks, a warrior mounting guard over it. At six o'clock, mass being said and breakfast eaten, Iberville, Bienville, Sauvole, the priest, and two Canadians set out for the village. They found it situated near a little stream surrounded by a palisade of cane ten feet high. They were met at the gateway, and led to the open space before the cabin of the Mongoulacha chief, who seemed to outrank the Bayougoula chief. When they were seated on the cane mats spread upon the ground for them, Iberville displayed his presents, — a gala lot, grandiose in the pleased eyes of the savages, a scarlet doublet embroidered in tinsel, scarlet hose, shirts, blankets, mirrors, beads, hatchets, knives.

The Indians reciprocated with their richest, — twelve large dressed deer-skins (which Iberville gave to his

men for shirts), and copious feasts of sagamity and bread.

While the presents were being apportioned, Iberville promenaded through the village, of which he writes a minute description. The temple, which occupied the central position in it, was round, about thirty feet in circumference, and constructed of timber set upright in the ground, and cemented half way up with mud. The roof was a conical-shaped cap made of split cane neatly joined together, with rude figures of birds and animals daubed upon it, noticeably a cock in red. Over the entrance was a shed eight feet deep, supported by two large pillars connected by a great transverse beam. On one side of the entrance were the same rude images as on the roof; on the other, the opossum appeared in all its carefully accentuated manifold uglinesses, — pig's head, rat's tail, badger's skin, and pouched stomach. Iberville, describing it, mentions that he had killed and examined eight. Entering the narrow tall door, two dried worm-eaten logs were perceived, smouldering, end to end, with a fire that was supposed never to die out. At the far end was a kind of table, a scaffold upon which lay bundles of bear, deer, and beef skins, — the offerings of the faithful to their tutelary deity, the opossum, called, in the vernacular of the tribe, Choucoucha, whose image, painted in red and black, ornamented the walls. Among the offerings Iberville discovered a glass bottle, — another track in the sand for him, which he failed not to trace to its origin. It also had been left by Tonty when in passing there to or from the mouth of the river.

With the exception of the portico, the cabins were

constructed exactly like the temple, some as large, others smaller. The earth furnished the flooring to all, and the opening in the apex of the conical roof did duty for chimney and windows. The beds, elevated about two feet above the ground, were frames, with bark-covered twigs or branches the size of a man's arm, for slats, over which were laid cane mats for mattresses, and bear-skins for covering. The only other furniture of the cabins were the earthen pots, which the women made neatly and delicately enough. The men went naked, — "without perceiving it," as Iberville says. The women wore girdles of cloth woven from the fibres of the bark of trees, coloured mostly red and white, and fringed with long cords, which fell to the knee, moving gracefully with every motion of the body. The little girls wore girdles of moss. The young women — Iberville says he saw no pretty ones among them — had a fashion of blackening their teeth and tattooing their faces and breasts, and were much given to bracelets and bangles. All the women wore their hair in packages, as it is described, on top of their heads. The young men adorned themselves with a primitive and masculine kind of a sash made of feathers strung together, weighted at the end with bits of stone or metal, which, hanging down behind like a horse's tail, jangled and tinkled when the wearers danced, and made as much clatter as a courier arriving.

The village consisted, in all, of about two hundred cabins, with some hundred and fifty men and a very small proportion of women, who had suffered greatly from the small-pox, which had destroyed a quarter of the tribe, and which was prevalent at the time. The dead, wrapped only in cane mats, and disposed under little

conical covers on the scaffolds erected all around the village, attracted huge flocks of bustards, and otherwise gave notice of the recent great mortality. The fields were small. They were tilled with implements made of bones, and when the crops were gathered, served as playgrounds for a game which consisted in throwing great sticks after a little bullet-shaped pebble. Iberville thought them the most beggarly set of Indian warriors he had ever seen. Although well-made and agile, their bodies were not hardened by exercise or discipline ; they kept their faces painted, and wore their hair short, and lived almost entirely on corn, with only an occasional treat of game, which, however, they had to hunt at great distances, the boundaries of the different hunting territories being strictly defined, and maintained by force of arms. They possessed a few chickens, which, tradition related, they had brought with them or obtained from some tribes coming from the Far West. The surrounding forests were rich in all sorts of woods except pine, but with no fruit trees except the wild apple and peach.

A party of Indians escorted the French to their camp. The rest of the warriors followed an hour afterwards, bringing presents of corn and bread, the Mongoulacha chief resplendently conspicuous among them in his red doublet.

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT cross, bearing the arms of France, was raised the following morning at the landing-place, and the next stage of the journey began. The Bayougoula chief, accompanying the party as guide and introducer, went in the barge with Iberville, eight of his men following in pirogues. He pointed out to Iberville, on the right-hand side of the river as they ascended, the little stream which conducted to the home of the Biloxi and Annochy. He called it the Ascantia River, and said it was the only fork he knew of from the Mississippi to the sea.

They came to the dividing-line between the hunting-grounds of the Houmas and Bayagoulas, — a little river which had a great reputation for fish, but which yielded to the French, however, only a meagre result of "cat." Scattered about the bank were a number of cabins, with the usual palmetto thatchings; and where it could catch the eye, stood a red leafless cornstalk, with heads of fish and bear, — the votive offerings of lucky hunters.¹ Bienville, who had landed with the Indians two leagues below for a bear-hunt, here rejoined his party with a fine trophy of his success. But there are two sides to every hunting story; and Sauvole, with the careful veracity of

¹ The Baton-Rouge which gave the capital of Louisiana its name.

the sportsman who is not in the hunt, explains in his narrative that it was an Indian who discovered the bear in the hollow of the tree, and drove it out by dropping fire-brands upon it ; and that all that Bienville did was to shoot the bear as it came out, and that he had been forced to yield the game to the discoverer of it.

They now passed the first island in the river ; it was about a league long. Two leagues above the island the right bank rose to an elevation of fifty feet, which continued for six miles, the opposite bank remaining as flat as ever. And still two leagues farther on, the Bayagoula chief pointed out to Iberville a little bayou not six feet wide, by which, he said, if the barges could only get through, a whole day's journey would be saved.

The Canadian commander was not one to be stopped by an "if" in such an emergency, with time to be shortened. He immediately halted his barges and sent Bienville forward in his canoe to investigate. His report was that the barges could be taken through at the expense of a little work. Orders were given to the Canadians, who shouldered their axes and went to work. A drift-pile thirty feet high and five hundred paces thick was cut through, a pathway three hundred and fifty feet long was cleared for the portage of the baggage, and the bottom of the runlet cleared of obstructions and as much as possible levelled. The luggage was unshipped and carried over the portage, pulleys were rigged to the trees, and the barges slowly tolled along.

It was raining, and the trampled ground soon became a mire in which the men could not keep foothold ; but under the urgings of their commander, and their own

eagerness to knock off at least one day from their irksome rowing, the men accomplished their task. At nine o'clock at night, by the blazing light of cane fagots, the barges were launched out of the by-way into the great river again, with eighteen miles safely put behind them. Thus Pointe Coupée was made, — a cut-off which the Mississippi, as keen to save time and distance as Iberville, was not slow to profit by, abandoning for it in time its original channel. The tired labourers crossed to the bank, where Bienville, preceding them, had the camp and supper already prepared, — a supper of Indian simplicity and frugality; the last two hundred pounds in each barge being reserved for the return voyage.

The crews rowed through the last stretch of the journey, six long leagues, cursing and swearing, Iberville writes, against all authors of false Relations and of such prolongations of anxiety, fatigue, and deprivation.

Cannon were fired well in advance, to apprise the Indians of their approach. Experience had evidently taught the savages whom and what to expect after such an announcement, and the proper palliatives.

As soon as the barges hove in sight, the deputations waiting at the landing-place raised their chant and flourished their calumet. The Bayagoula chief answered in kind for the French; embraces and tenderesses were profusely lavished in the reception, and first the officers, then all the crew, were smoked with.

Iberville, Bienville, Sauvole, and the priest, with an escort of Canadians, set out at once for the village.

The deputation, singing all the time, walked ahead, leading, without a stop, through swamps and canebrakes, and up and down the little steep, irregular hills that


diversified the difficulties of the way, at a speed which severely taxed the heavily clad white men to follow.

Four hundred feet from the village another deputation, with song and pipe, stood waiting, and another ceremonious smoking was inflicted upon the impatient Iberville. They proceeded again, and again were halted upon a little elevation about a hundred paces away, until the chief was officially informed by a messenger of their arrival, and the proper invitation to advance was received. This time the procession attained the entrance of the village, the chanters always in front, singing, the warriors following with their calumets.

The chief and two of his dignitaries now made their appearance, each one holding — as a propitiatory and complimentary effort — a white cross, the calumet of the Christians.

Iberville and his officers were saluted, and carefully escorted to the temple, where, on account of the rain, mats had been spread for the reception.

After smoking and partaking of sagamity and pumpkin, Iberville came directly to the point with his presents, explaining that he had still handsomer ones in the barges awaiting their acceptance, — a piece of astuteness which the Indians seemed to understand and appreciate perfectly well. Their politeness was extremely painstaking. After each separate gift, the whole assembly would rise, and extending their arms, give the prolonged "Hou ! Hou ! Hou !" howl of thanks. The rain ceasing, an adjournment was made to the open space in front of the chief's cabin, where all the village could gather around the strangers, and where the smoking and eating suffered to languish a single instant. In the



afternoon a ball in all form was given. Singers, stationing themselves on one side the open space, raised the music, beating time with the *chichicouchy*¹ rattles in their hands. A moment's pause to whet expectation and curiosity, and the youth and beauty of the tribe bounded into the circle,— thirty-five girls and young men, gorgeous in all their savage panoply of costume, with their girdles of feathers, fringe, and tinsel flying and tinkling in the air, faces and bodies glittering with fresh paint. The girls wore bouquets of bird plumes in their braids, and carried in their hands long bunches of variegated feathers, which they used as fans and to beat time with.

The bucks had added to their bravery by hanging disks of thin metal from their girdles, which clashed and banged against their knees, adding a martial beat to the measures of the *chichicouchy* and the songs.

For three hours, the dancing was kept up, without a sign of fatigue or lessened pleasure. When night fell, all repaired to the cabin of the chief, where, after supper by the light of a cane fagot fifteen feet long and two thick, the young men danced a war-dance, armed *cap-a-pie*, with bows, arrows, knives, and tomahawks. At midnight all retired, leaving the chief with his guests,— not to repose, however ; for Iberville says that the Houma and Bayagoula chiefs began immediately to harangue one the other, the Houma speaking for himself, the Bayagoula for himself and the French.

The Houma chief is described as a venerable patriarch of seventy, five feet ten inches tall, and stout in proportion, with a flattened forehead which was then an

¹ Gourds, holding a few pebbles.

obsolete fashion, and not customary among the men of his tribe.

The Houma village was essentially like the Bayagoula. The cabins, numbering about one hundred and forty, were built in a double row around the top of a hill, with the usual open space in the centre. At most, it held three hundred and fifty warriors. The cornfields lay in the valleys and on neighbouring hills, the soil of which was black, strong, and rich.

The French wished to return to their boats the first thing in the morning ; but the chief detained them until the women had finished pounding a present of corn for them. While they were waiting, six of the men from the boats, anxious at their long absence, appeared in search of them. The pounding completed, all took their departure, after firing numerous salutes. They were followed to the outskirts of the settlement by protesting hosts and politely weeping women. Two hours after their arrival at the boat the chief paid the return visit, followed by a retinue of half his village, loaded with presents of corn. The men all carried crosses, and when they came to the great cross erected by the French, they marched solemnly in procession around it, singing to it and throwing offerings of tobacco upon it, determined at any price to secure its good-will. They received the anticipated return of the handsomer presents awaiting them in the barges, and were well satisfied with their red embroidered coat, and the shirts, knives, hatchets, flints, and beads that Iberville gave with a liberal hand.

The calumet was smoked, and one of the principal warriors made a speech to Iberville, which lasted over a

half hour ; all the officers listening gravely and attentively, although not one of them understood a word of it. Iberville needing more corn, forty men were sent during the night to the village for it. They returned by daylight, bringing at least three barrels of it, with quantities of pumpkins and some fowls.

The Houmas had much to say of Tonty, who had passed five days with them at their village, leaving his boats at the same place where Iberville had moored his. But the Quinipissas gave the lie direct to the Relations by stating that their village was seven days distant from the mouth of the river, and that neither Tonty nor any of the French had ever been there, — which, says Iberville, greatly distressed and perplexed him ; and he could not see that he was any nearer certainty than when at the Bayagoulas. Apprehending that the Houmas might also have reasons for concealing the truth, there seemed to be no way of arriving at the solution of his doubts and the Relations' misstatements, except by going on to the next tribe mentioned in the Relations, — to the Coroas, six leagues below whom, according to the Récollet father, the enigmatical fork in the river had been met. The next day, Sunday, after the usual oratorical display by the Indian warriors, and another procession around the cross, and more oblations of tobacco upon it, the boats pushed off from shore for another forced journey of still nine days' more hard rowing up stream.

Iberville started in the pirogue with the five Houmas and one Tensas, who had consented to accompany the expedition ; but in order to see if the Tensas would not talk differently when separated from his crowd, he soon

changed to his barge, taking the Tensas with him. The latter, however, firmly sustained the assertion that he had been as high as the Arkansas, and that the Mississippi, or Malbouchia, did not fork. He drew a map of the country, showing that in three days they would arrive at a river flowing in from the west,—the Sassenocougoula (Red River), which had two forks; and upon one of them he named several tribes mentioned by Tonty in his account of La Salle's journey towards the Arkansas. One day, after leaving the Sassenocougoula, the Tensas said the Mississippi, by a great turn, would lead them back to within a league and a half of the Houma village they had just left, where they would find the chief and his warriors waiting to feast them. Three days after this turn they would reach the village of Theloel, composed of eight smaller villages, of which the Natchez formed one. From the Natchez, ascending the river two days and a half, they would reach the Tensas, and three days higher up than the Tensas they would find the Coroa, or Yazous. All of which was fairly correct; but nothing could have been more different from the order of tribes and distances given in the Relation of Father Zenobe Membré, contained in Father Chrétien Le Clerc's "Établissement de la Foi," his guide.

In one column, Iberville set down the tribes as they appeared in the Relation, with the distances there ascribed between them. In another, he placed the distances he had made so far in the journey, as calculated by himself and his pilots, with the Indian villages he had passed, filling out the rest of the journey, as far as the Arkansas, with the distances and tribes, all the Indians individually and collectively agreed upon. The

result of a comparison between them was a difference of ninety-three miles in distance, and no resemblance whatever in the order of villages.

It was noon ; the stop was made for dinner. He subjected the Indians again to a rigid cross-examination. The Bayagoula, impressed by such obstinate pertinacity in looking for a fork which did not exist in the river, and knowing full well that Tonty had not passed through any fork, but had gone to the mouth and returned by the main stream, finally was driven to confess that the Mongoulacha chief had in his possession a written paper like the one Iberville had given him, which Tonty had left with him to give to a man who was to come up the river from the sea. This paper could be for no other than La Salle. Iberville reflected for a space of two hours, and then, he says, came to the conclusion that so many Indians could not lie about so patent a fact as a fork in the river. If Father Zenobe Membre's Relation was true, that La Salle, Tonty, and he had descended by the western branch of the Mississippi, and as the Indians and this letter conclusively proved that Tonty had descended and ascended, the second time, by the same route as he did the first with La Salle, and that he had confidently expected La Salle to ascend also by this route, coming from the Gulf into the mouth of the river, — then this stream upon which they travelled and which Iberville was on, according to them, was not the Mississippi, but a western branch of the Mississippi ; and as there was, as far as Pensacola, no considerable stream east of this, flowing into the Gulf, except the Mobile, then it followed that that must be the Mississippi, — which was an absurdity, as the mouth

of the Mobile River did not at all answer to the description of the mouth of the Mississippi. And Iberville says, further, he knew that when Father Zenobe was at Bay St. Louis (Matagorda Bay) with La Salle, he had stated that that water might belong to the western branch of the Mississippi, but that he was not able to recognize it, having only descended the eastern branch. Throwing the priestly narrative to the winds, and pronouncing the author a liar who had disguised every truth, the Canadian commander determined that he *was* in the Mississippi, and that he would consume no more time and expend no more trouble in the vain attempt of trying to make his facts tally with the Récollet's fiction. He issued his orders, the boats were turned down stream, and by six o'clock in the evening they were again tied at the landing of the Houmas.

Bienville and two Canadians were immediately speeded to the village to acquaint the Bayagoulas tarrying there with the change of plan, and bid them be at the landing-place by daylight if they wished to return with the French. But the Bayougoula warriors, engaged in frolicking with the Houma women, showed so little disposition to heed the summons that Bienville, feigning great indignation, turned upon his heel, and refusing all refreshment and overtures, returned to the camp, making the sixteen — or more correctly, considering the country, the eighteen — miles in less than three hours: an exhibition of physical strength which all the journals note with admiration, mentioning especially that he had to feel most of his way home in the dark, through the canebrakes.

The village, terrified beyond measure at such portentous conduct, hurriedly got corn, pumpkins, chickens,

and calumets together, loaded them upon the recalcitrant Bayagoulas, who were urged to hasten with all speed after the offended messenger, the Houma chief sending six of his tribe along with them, and promising to present himself in the morning.

Iberville accepted their explanations and excuses, and sent back some of the Houmas to the village by torch-light for more corn, which he offered to buy. But the chief marched in the next morning at the head of ninety of his people, men and women, bearing full supplies of provisions as presents, all brimming over with such deferences and homages to the cross, and such devices in the way of politeness and tenderesses to the French, that the threatened harmony was completely restored, and the reconciliation made a love-feast.

It was not long before the anxious hosts had the pleasure of seeing their difficult guests push forward the preparations for departure ; and there was another effusion of embraces and protestations on both sides. Finally the moment of departure came, the officers were supported to the barges, the barges pushed off, the cannon fired a salute, the Indians shouted, the French cried, "Vive le roi !" With supra-Gallic refinement of compliment, these savage Frenchmen gave back the cry in their crude but eager imitations until the barges disappeared down the river.

Rowing willingly and easily down stream towards bread and wine, and away from corn-meal and simple water, the men brought the barges next day to the Ascantia, the little river that led to the lake where the ships lay at anchor. The canoes gained a day by going through the new "cut-off," where they found, they re-

ported, the alligators swarming around the still glowing embers of their fires.

The large boats not being able to get through the Ascantia, Iberville determined to explore it himself in pirogues. He left the expedition in command of his next in rank, Sauvole, and his own barge, with the Bayagoula chief, to Bienville, whom he charged to buy if possible, but at any hazards to secure, the all-important letter of Tonty from the Mongoulacha chief. Then, pushing through the tangled opening of the little stream, he, with his Indian guide and four Canadian attendants, in their two pirogues, were lost to view.

In answer to their cannon-shot, Sauvole and Bienville found a party of Bayagoulas waiting at their landing with song and calumet and the joyful news that the two lost sailors had been found, and at the time were in the village.

Here the first disagreeable feeling was elicited from the natives by an untoward incident, which modern readers must regret, although the chroniclers of it, in no mood either for Récollet priests or their narratives, treat it with an unseemly want of sympathy, if not with actual levity. In the confusion of disembarkation, Father Anasthase Douay missed the wallet in which he carried his breviary and a little manuscript, his faithful journal of all that had occurred during the expedition. The loss was irreparable to him; he was inconsolable, and in the excitement of his grief attributed the theft to an Indian who had travelled in the same boat with him, and who, he declared, never took his eyes off the wallet when he, the priest, took out his breviary to read his prayers. The next day, the Feast of the Annunciation, it

was, when the officers went to the Indian village. Father Anasthase accompanied them, in search of his property, and laid a complaint before the chief that one of his tribe had stolen it. The village was instantly called together and the accusation stated, the reverend father standing by, weeping bitterly, — hoping thus, the savage conscience proving invulnerable, to touch the savage heart. The Indians were, or appeared to be, so disconcerted that they could not answer when the chief asked them if any one had seen the wallet. The priest then visited every cabin, in tears and despair, until the Indians, growing more and more offended, began to be threatening, when the French had the priest conducted to the barges and left there. But the *entente cordiale*, once broken, could not be resumed. The old women stopped pounding corn, the messengers returned with the supplies of provisions they were taking to the boats. The forms of amity were indeed preserved, but no assistance or hospitality was further offered or yielded. Bienville bought Tonty's letter for a hatchet from the Mongoulacha chief. The suspicious savage explained that he had concealed it, fearing the French might be Spaniards. He now produced, in addition, an "Imitation of Christ," some pictures, and a gun which he said the Iron Hand had also given him.

One can fancy the eagerness with which the precious document was opened and read, and the expressions of disgust and impatience which fell from all lips at its tardy appearance amid the doubts and misgivings which it so easily and clearly solved. Besides settling the fact that the Mississippi was the Mississippi, it explained away one at least of Iberville's perplexities. It was

dated from the village of the Quinipissas, showing that the Mongoulachas and Bayagoulas, for their own purposes, had either deceived him, or were deceiving Iberville's party by giving a false name to the village.

Hearing, Tonty wrote, that La Salle had lost a ship in his expedition in search of the mouth of the river, and that the savages were plundering him, and fearing that he was in open warfare with them, he, Tonty, with twenty-five men, had descended to the mouth of the river to assist him. All the Indians met, going and coming, had shown themselves friendly ; but although he had explored the Gulf twenty-five miles on each side the mouth of the river, he had discovered no trace of his friend. He had found the cross bearing the arms of the king, erected by La Salle eight years before, lying half buried in the sand, and he had set it up again, seven leagues. Upon a tree standing near the cross he had fixed a sign, and in the hollow of it he had placed a letter, addressed "A M. de La Salle, Gouverneur-Général de la Louisiane."¹

Bienville also bought from the Mongoulacha chief, for a gun and some ammunition, a little boy, who, Sauvole says, cried bitterly at parting from his people.


¹ It should be explained that the Mississippi itself is responsible for some of the errors attributed to the Relations, and also for much of La Salle's mystification on the coast of Texas. When he descended and ascended the river it was flood-high, which so changed the topography of its banks and its mouth that Tonty, in his later trip, almost failed to recognize them. Iberville also met a man afterwards who knew the river well, and who was with Tonty among the Quinipissas. He assured Iberville that the chief of the Quinipissas was also chief of the Mongoulachas, and that they were established twenty leagues lower down the river.

The restored sailors recounted their wanderings and sufferings to a sympathetic and interested audience. They had found their way to the river, and were trying to ascend the banks of it, in the hope of catching up with the boats, when, at the last extremity of fatigue and starvation, they were rescued by some Indians, who, ministering to them in their exhausted condition, in their kindness conveyed them to the Bayougoulas, offering, in case they could not find their companions, to take them in pirogues to their vessels at Ship Island.

Making from twelve to nineteen leagues a day, the barges soon reached the passes. One of them — evidently the *Passe à Sauvole* — was, by Iberville's commands, explored and sounded. In a reversed order, the first experiences and sufferings in the Delta were gone through, — minus, however, the terrific storm ; and the barges drew up alongside their ships, their work done, just one month and two weeks after starting out, and just eight hours after the arrival of Iberville. The commander's voyage had not been a light one. The *Ascantia* proved to be about ten feet wide and three or four deep, and very much obstructed. During the first day, he had travelled seven leagues, and made fifty portages over fallen trees and drifted rafts. The country was one of the finest he had ever seen, rich earth, fine forests, and no canebrakes, but overflowing five or six feet in high water. The river was filled with fish and crocodile, and wild turkeys in quantities had been heard, although there had been no success in killing any. On the second day the guide deserted ; but he determined to continue without him, certain, if he returned to the Mississippi, that he could not overtake the barges, and wishing to

show the Indians that he could go where he chose,—confident, at all events, of reaching his ships, even if he were forced to abandon the pirogues he had, travel by land, and make other pirogues as he needed them. One of the Canadians fell ill, and Iberville had to replace him at the portages, carrying one end of a pirogue, which, he says, fatigued him greatly. In all, he made eighty portages during the journey. The *Ascantia* was re-named the *Iberville*; the first lake they came to, a pretty oval sheet of water, six leagues by four, was named after the young principal of the expedition, the Count of Maurepas; the second after his father, Pontchartrain, the Minister of Marine.

There was no time for explorations or soundings, only for such observations as a forced march permitted; but taken as they were by an eye born and trained to accuracy, they stand to-day, in Iberville's official report, a fair description of the region. Camping at night on the low grassy points or islands around the lakes, he made acquaintance with those pests of succeeding generations of hunters and fishermen, the insatiable lake-shore mosquitoes,—“terrible little animals,” he says, “to men in need of rest.” His record of seven to twelve leagues a day,—a pretty good record for the character of the country traversed,—soon brought him to the shore opposite his ships. The weather was cloudy and windy. He kindled a great fire to attract the attention of his ships, that boats might be sent next day, in case the lake proved too rough for crossing in pirogues. The morning was clear, however, the water calm. He set out in the pirogues, and was more than half way over to Ship Island when he met the barges coming to investigate



the cause of the fire of the night before. He arrived on board the "Badine" at midday, — eight hours, as has been said, before his barges from the Mississippi.

Speaking of the Tonty letter, he remarked characteristically, that he was sorry he was not in the party which descended the river with it, for he should have found the tree in which Tonty had deposited the other letter. He says he could easily have done so, as there were very few trees eight leagues from the mouth of the river, and those few only on the left-hand side ascending.

Sauvole reported that he had discovered one spot on the river-lands which did not overflow. It was upon the left bank descending, about twenty-five leagues above the mouth of the river, and a league more or less inward.

CHAPTER VI.

INSTEAD of searching for Sauvole's one point of high land upon the bank of the Mississippi, and making his establishment at once where Bienville was forced to make it later, after fifteen years of costly and painful experimentation, Iberville, pressed by time and diminishing provisions, cast his eye around for a situation nearer at hand. It was vitally necessary for him to make his establishment at once, on account of failing supplies, and as near to his ships as possible. The mouth of the Pascagoula River, with its easy inland communication, was obviously the first choice ; but it had been surveyed during the expedition by Iberville's orders, and there was no depth of water in it. The little bay of Biloxi, with its island shelter, offered the next best conditions of harbourage proximity to the fleet and to the villages of the Biloxis, Pascagoulas, and Mochtohs, from which, at need, assistance might be drawn. Iberville, within a few hours after his return from his arduous journey, with all his fatigues upon him, despatched the felucca to this point to investigate the practicability of reaching it in the transports. An unfavourable answer was brought the next morning. Taking the felucca then himself, Iberville sailed back to the lakes he had just traversed, to see what they might offer. The following night he returned, about ten

o'clock, having lost his bearings again and again in the darkness and in the heavy sea, which every moment all but swamped him, and in a tide that had already carried him beyond the islands, and was carrying him out to sea, when the lights in the ships' masts rescued him. While he had found on Pontchartrain and Maurepas good situations for a fort and sufficient depth of water for the transports, the distance from the fleet and from the Mississippi would make them acceptable only as a last resource. The statement of an officer of the "Marin" contradicting the low depth of water at the mouth of the Pascagoula was sufficient to induce him to proceed there at once with men, implements, and materials for work. But after two hours' sounding, he found not only a uselessly meagre channel through intervening sand-bars, but an oyster-bank which blocked the mouth of the river. There seemed nothing for it but to make the establishment on Lake Pontchartrain, with all the foreseen drawbacks of tedious transportation from the ships, and without the reinforcement of workmen which otherwise could have been drawn from the crews. Bienville, who had accompanied the felucca, as usual, in his pirogue, was sent back to the fleet with the discouraging news.

In passing Biloxi, on his way from Pascagoula, the indefatigable commander made one more trial of sounding with his own hand. The proverbial reward to the eye of the master ensued. A seven-foot deep channel was found, which led to a snug little harbour between the mainland and the island, which was a complete cloak against the south wind. Following the terraced-looking, oak-grown shore around its curve, a diminutive bay

opened to Iberville's view. He made the tour of it in his pirogue, and that night slept on the spot he had selected for his fort, which was at least to serve his purpose until a more advantageous position could be selected, under less stringent circumstances.

A railroad trestle now spans the deep embrasured little recess, and the eye of the speeding passenger can note on the eastern side the eminence upon which Iberville camped nearly two centuries ago. Now, as then, guns, planted upon it, would sweep three fourths of the limited horizon, arbitrarily commanding the channel in all its length and breadth. The channel now is ever white with sails of business or pleasure boats, and the fanciful gaudiness of summer villas studs the sombre, heavily-wooded beach. Opposite the island, under the wide-spreading branches of the great oaks where once the fishing and hunting parties of Indians lighted their fires and swung their caldrons, a quaint assemblage of French and Spanish houses form a town,—a town picturesque and redolent of an indefinable charm, despite the sordid vulgarities of competing summer-resort hotels. The eye must be churlish indeed that does not brighten at the recollection of the panorama of the passing hours there, from the time the sun first rises, to set in motion the grand phantasmagory of cloud and water transmutations, until it drops, oppressive with tropical splendour, into a sea glorified to receive it, out of which the moon rises, or has risen, to plate mainland and open sea, the town, island, anchored boats, and rippling water, in one silvery sheen; or, when the moon does not rise, when the stars shine out and, increasing in size and brilliancy, seem to descend lower and lower

to the earth, the water striking back rival and scintillating reflections, until the constellations seem to form kinships with the lights of the town and with the lamps swinging in the dim cordage over invisible hulks.


The eight-mile stretch of island in front — a weanling from the mainland, according to tradition — has lost the game which still gives it its name and its beauty, if it ever had any. It holds a thinning forest growth, — a wind-riven, wind-shaken, weirdly ugly race of stunted oaks, dislocated and distorted by their sharp cyclonic struggles: some of them, old and wizen, still crouching from the blast that felled them in tender youth; some, prone upon the ground, whence their branches have grown upright into stout trees; all of them tied and gnarled together, like forlorn hopes, by vines as wrinkled and sinewy as themselves, all of them hoar with a moss that had never been otherwise than whipped to raggedness by the wind.

Trees were cut, a space was cleared, and the plan of the fort laid out. But the impatient Iberville complained that the work went slowly: few of the men were good woodsmen; some of them took a day to cut a tree; but he acknowledged that the trees were of prodigious size, and of the hardest oak and nut woods; a forge had to be constructed to mend the axes which were broken constantly upon them. Large draughts of workmen were supplied from the crews of the ships, between which and the fort the barges and small boats plied incessantly, landing the guns, ammunition, provisions, and live-stock, and ferrying the details of men back and forth over the twenty-five miles of separation.

The logs for the bastions, and posts for the stockade were cut a half league away, and boated a hundred at a time to the fort. For two days twenty-five men were kept busy sowing corn and peas. The officers multiplied themselves to meet their double duties on sea and land. Even Father Anasthase had to prepare for Easter ubiquitously ; confessing the ships and then confessing the fort, celebrating the Communion here, then hurrying away to celebrate it there, on one of his journeys coming within two fingers of sinking to the bottom, a storm striking the barge, heavily laden with cannon-balls, the lake rising in billows, and the rain pouring down in such torrents as to render the lake fresh for eight days afterwards.

In the thick of the work five Spanish deserters arrived, on their way to Mexico. They brought a sad tale of the mortality from starvation and disease they had left behind them. The commandant had hurried away to Vera Cruz with the news of the designs of the French upon the coast, leaving his garrison in dire want of every necessity ; all who could, were deserting.

The Spaniards were so full of betrayal to their late masters, and so eager for enterprise, they painted the beauty and richness of the Mexican mines, the supineness of the Spaniards, the easy distance to San Luis Potosi, the facilities for capturing the periodical silver caravels, and their own ability to conduct the French thither, in such glowing language that even the practical Iberville was fired with enthusiasm. He kept the deserters to take back with him to France for future reference and use, and in his official journal to the minister reckoned that with five hundred Cana-



diaps (he never reckons with Frenchmen), he could hold in terror the whole Spanish territory.

The necessity of relieving the pressure upon the supplies pushed the fort to a hasty completion. Two of the bastions were built of logs two and a half feet thick; the other two were of stockade. It was surmounted by a parapet four feet high, armed with twelve cannon, and liberally equipped with men and ammunition; but the lodgings and magazines were yet unfinished when Iberville and Surgères took their departure, carrying with them only the bare crew and provisions necessary to get to France.

The young lieutenant of the "Marin," Sauvole,¹ was left in command, — "a young man," Iberville writes,

¹ This Sauvole, sometimes called the first governor of Louisiana, is often identified, and by good authorities, with a François Marie le Moyne, Sieur de Sauvole, a brother of Iberville and Bienville, of whom, beyond the fact of his birth, very little is authentically known. None of the official documents connected with the early history of Louisiana mention him as the brother of Iberville and Bienville. M. Pierre Margry, in his able introduction to the sixth volume of his "*Découvertes et Documents historiques*," introduces him briefly and simply as "*parent* de M. Polastron, commandant de St. Malo." Sauvole in his *Relation* never insinuates that he was a Le Moyne and brother to his commander-in-chief; on the contrary, in this fragmentary document there is evinced a marked prejudice against Canadians, and no admiration, in speaking of Iberville and Bienville. Iberville, who is most careful always to note "My brother De Bienville," calls him only the Sieur de Sauvole, with the above laconic commendations; and finally, De Bienville, who, during the course of his long life, more than once recalls his services and losses, and those of his family, to the Government, in order to stimulate the generosity of a minister, does not include this very creditable career in his account.

"of merit and capable." Bienville was advanced to Sauvole's position of "lieutenant of the king," and Levasseur Russonelle, the Canadian, to that of sergeant-major. Father Anasthase, satisfied, and perhaps more than satisfied, with discoveries of the Mississippi, particularly by Canadians, demanded to be taken back to France to enter his convent, which, he said, he never wished to leave again. Iberville installed the almoner of the "Badine," M. Bordenave, in his place,—"a very honest man," he says; but he bluffly regrets not having a Jesuit missionary to leave, "who," he says, "would have learned the language of the Indians in a very short while." On the 2d of May, Iberville and Surgères, with the last detail of men, withdrew from the fort; on the third, a Sunday, they sailed from Ship Island. They arrived in France during the latter part of June.

Sauvole applied himself with serious conscientiousness to the administration of his small government. He had mass celebrated every morning as regularly as aboard ship, which, he notes, Bienville and Levasseur attended, setting a very good example to the men. Work on the unfinished buildings was prosecuted with vigour; while to promote and maintain the discipline so necessary in a small military establishment he put himself to studying the characters and dispositions of his men,—a rather hopeless pursuit when applied to the men he had to do with.

There is no trace of the hardy Canadian optimism of his predecessor in the elegantly written journal of the young Frenchman. It begins, indeed, hopefully enough; but it soon dwindles away both in volume and

spirit, ending with detached entries penned with the listless indifference that betrays climatic enervation.

The seed sowed by Iberville, which sprouted so promptly, and from which such wonders were expected, soon withered under the hot sun, in the prolonged drought which came to afflict them, — a drought during which even the swamps dried up. Water became so scarce that had it not been for the discovery of a spring a league and a half from the fort, great suffering would have ensued. Provisions grew so scarce that a famine also would have set in, were it not for the arrival of the transport which, by Iberville's injunctions, had been sent to St. Domingo for supplies. The uncanny shapes of alligators met the eye at every moment, — they were killed at the very foot of the fort ; and a rattlesnake paid his respects by stinging one of Sauvole's dogs, which died in a quarter of an hour, after swelling so greatly that he could not move from the spot. The soil was found ungrateful, nothing but burning sand, in which innumerable fruitless sowings were made. Before attention was called to it, the boats in the water were seriously damaged by worms ; the very trees in the forest were worm-eaten as they stood. In the hot weather the men could only work two hours morning and evening, and most of them were attacked with dysentery, from drinking bad water. As for their other beverage, brandy, Sauvole can only speak of it with bitterness as "the most pernicious of drinks, not only on account of the health, but on account of the discussions and quarrels it engenders. It ruins the body and brutalizes the mind." And whatever precautions he could take, it was never possible for him to make the

men drink their ration daily ; they would hide it in secret places until enough accumulated to intoxicate. Wine would not have been a hundredth part so bad, or beer, had he possessed the ingredients to make it. With either one or the other the men would have behaved better, and the officers been spared the infliction of so much punishment.


On the 1st of July, two pirogues paddled across the bay to the fort. They were filled, not with Indian visitors, as might be expected, but with white men,—Canadians and two Seminary priests, Fathers Montigny and Davion, who had journeyed down the river, from their distant missions among the Tensas and Tunicas, to see the new French establishment, of which the Indians had brought them rumours. They were worn out with fatigue and from their intense suffering for want of drinking water during the ten days it had taken them to make their way from the mouth of the river to Biloxi. But for a rain, they would have perished of thirst.

They were received with all the cordiality anticipated, and their spent forces refreshed with venison broth, from a deer providentially found by the hunters the day before ; but it was before the arrival of the transport of provisions from St. Domingo, and the addition of eighteen men was a serious tax on the supplies, which had been measured with no lavish hand to carry a certain number of mouths to a certain term ; so that Sauvole was forced to beg his guests to depart after nine days. The Canadians acceded unwillingly enough ; but the good priests, seeing the straits to which their host was put for their entertainment, did their best to command their turbulent companions. M. de Montigny

wished to establish himself among the Natchez, who, he said, were the most numerous and respected of the Indians along the Mississippi. Sauvole gave him presents with which to ingratiate himself among them, — wine and wafers for his sacred offices, and flour for himself.

The Indian visitors had to be treated with more circumspection. Every week brought a deputation from the neighboring tribes, prompted by curiosity and greed, and Sauvole, according to his instructions, was careful not to disappoint them. The first to make an appearance was their old acquaintance Autobiscania, the Bayagoula chief, with a party of his warriors. They were received with military honours, which duly terrified them, as was intended ; but the presents reassured them, particularly the shirts, which, to their great delight, were fitted upon them. They looked with wonder at the fort, beyond measure astonished that the French could get together and pile up such a number of great logs in such a short space of time. All went well until the sentinel came at nightfall to get the watchword from the sergeant. The whispering threw the Indians into a state of serious meditation and fears of treachery, out of which Sauvole had to calm and soothe them.

At daylight, they confessed that their wives were on the other side of the bay, and they would also like to see the fort. Permission being given, the savage dames were sent for. When they landed, Autobiscania, anxious that the show should be equal to the female anticipations, made signs to prompt Sauvole to put his men under arms, and ran himself to hunt up the drummer. When the visit terminated, which it seems to have done to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, Sauvole sent



two French boys along with the Indians to learn their language, keeping an Indian boy with him to learn French.

Autobiscania was persuaded to remain and guide Bienville to the Quinipissas. The wily chief, wishing to retain his monopoly of friendship with the French, hesitated a long time before consenting, alleging a fear that the Quinipissas would kill the white men. Bienville, carrying presents and a calumet, remained with the Quinipissas, or Colapissis, as they were also called, four days, during which time a friendship was cemented with all ceremony on both sides. But the return visit to the fort was not paid, as promised by them, the Bayagoula chief, no doubt, sufficiently intimidating them to prevent it.

In answer to his question, the Quinipissas told Bienville that they had never seen nor heard of La Salle or Tonty. Bienville then visited the villages of the Mochtohs, Biloxis, and Pascagoulas, along the Pascagoula River, eight leagues above its mouth. Unfortunately he kept no journal, and Sauvole in his journal gives small and unsatisfactory extracts from the report rendered him. The three villages in all contained not more than one hundred and twenty cabins, and counted but a hundred warriors. A party of them came shortly afterwards to the fort, bringing their calumet and a present of deer-skins. Sauvole says that they were the most polite and most self-possessed savages he had seen.

From Pascagoula River, Bienville went to Mobile Bay, which he again explored and sounded. Then, with eight Canadians, he marched by land to Pensacola, and made a thorough reconnoissance of that place, and

found it by no means in the deserted, abandoned state which the deserters reported, and which Sauvole in his journal so frankly desires.

After a short stay in Biloxi, Bienville set out again, on the 23d of August, with two pirogues, five men, three weeks' provision, and a stock of presents, on the more important enterprise of retracing Iberville's route into the Mississippi, and hunting up the tribes living on the banks of the Ouacha River (Bayou Plaquemines). In three days he reached the Iberville River, and in a week was at the Bayagoula village, which he found in a great state of excitement over a sudden attack of the Houmas.

Obtaining a guide, he proceeded to the Ouacha, and paddled up it twelve leagues to the Ouacha landing. The village was situated a quarter of a league inland. But Bienville met here Indians of a different temper from any encountered hitherto in his travels. So ferocious and menacing were they that he was very glad to beat a retreat to his pirogues, where, during the night, they made an attempt to surprise him. The village was composed of three tribes,—the Ouachas, the Chouachas, and the Opelousas; the last described as a wandering tribe, mostly frequenting the Gulf shores.

Bienville intended following the Ouacha to its exit into the Gulf, had there been such an exit; but, as the Indians informed him, the little river lost itself in various inland bayous and swamps, most of which dried up during the summer. He therefore returned to the Mississippi, and the pirogues had rapidly paddled their way down stream to within twenty-three miles above the mouth, where they were arrested by a most startling

apparition. A corvette lay anchored in mid-stream before them. Sauvole gives only a succinct account of what followed. Iberville, in his report to the Minister of Marine, enlarges upon it, from subsequent interviews with his brother. One of the pirogues was sent to speak the corvette. It proved to be English. Bienville now advanced in his pirogue, and went aboard. The captain, named Banks, turned out to be a quondam prisoner of Iberville's, captured in Hudson Bay, and consequently an acquaintance of Bienville's, to whom he gave all the information desired about himself and his ship, confessing frankly that he was in search of the Mississippi. It was, at last, the English expedition of which Iberville had received warning, and against which he had held himself so sedulously on the alert. This was one of three vessels, loaded with emigrants, which had, in truth, set sail from London to make an establishment upon the banks of the Mississippi, about the very time in October that Iberville with his squadron sailed from Brest. They had passed the winter in Carolina, where the greater number of the colonists, pleased with the climate, had chosen to remain. In May, one ship had returned to England, leaving the other two to pursue the object of the expedition, — the search for the mouth of the Mississippi. The captain said they had cruised fruitlessly for thirty leagues round about where the Relations of Tonty and Hennepin had placed it. Returning the length of the Gulf coast, he, Captain Banks, had found this stream, and entered it; and as it was the only large stream he had discovered in his cruise on that shore, he doubted not it was the Mississippi. Bienville, the Relations say, convinced the cap-

tain that the river they were in, and all the surrounding country, were in the possession of the king of France, who had force sufficient at hand to protect his rights. Bienville had the satisfaction of seeing the captain assent to his representations, and finally raise anchor and head the corvette down stream. The "English Turu" in the Mississippi still commemorates the bend of the river where the young lieutenant and his five Canadians obtained this triumph over the Englishman.¹ Bienville remained on the corvette, conversing with the captain, and having sufficient intercourse with another personage aboard to attract the suspicious distrust of the English officers. This personage had made himself known to the young Canadian as a French Protestant, by name Second, an engineer, and one of the band of emigrants who had disembarked in the English king's possession of Carolina. He assured Bienville that he and all the French refugees with him wished with their whole hearts that the king of France would permit them to establish themselves in Louisiana under his domination; he an-

¹ The falsehood usually attributed to Bienville, his assurance to Captain Banks that the river he was on was not the Mississippi, which lay farther to the east, appears to be an afterthought of the captain's, and no wise an improvement upon the truth, certainly, if he was seeking self exculpation. Daniel Coxe, the son of the principal of the expedition, and the claimant of the valley of the Mississippi, does not mention it in his account of the transaction in his "Carolana," and it is not mentioned by Sauvole, Pennicaut, or by Iberville, to whom it would have been quite a natural and justifiable method of procedure with an enemy. It is first met in French in the journal of La Harpe, who came to Louisiana only in 1718, and he evidently gives it to emphasize the gullibility of the Englishman. See Thomassy, "Géologie Pratique de la Louisiane," p. 6.

swered for it that there would soon be a numerous colony of them settled, that they were unhappy under the rule of the English, who were not congenial to the French. He begged Bienville to take charge of his petition to the French king, giving his London and Carolina address, that the answer might be forwarded to him. Sauvole does not mention this Protestant episode, but Iberville dwells upon it, as Bienville apparently dwelt upon it to him, as one would repeat an advantageous proposition which as a business man one wished, but dared not advise.


After seeing the English corvette safe out of the river, the captain promising and threatening to return and make good his claim, Bienville paddled up the river to a portage through which he cut across to Lake Pontchartrain. He reached Biloxi early in October.

Coincidentally, a visit from some Pascagoulas who brought with them a Choctaw, confirmed the seriousness of the English determination to encroach upon, if not take possession of, the southern end of the continent. The Choctaw (from the upper Alabama region) related that the English had already had dealings with them, and that two Englishmen were established among the Chickasaws (in the upper Mississippi district). This Davion the missionary had also discovered, the Englishmen having tried to buy beaver-skins from the Frenchmen established among the Tunicas, and even making propositions to the Indians to kill the missionary, which they refused to do.

CHAPTER VII.

AT Biloxi, a fine August brought the trying summer to a close, and an early autumn put an end to the illness and discomfort of the men, — at least, Sauvole chronicles no complaint. The winter came on, terribly cold, the drinking-water freezing in the glasses. A new century was ushered in, whether with any festivities on the part of the little garrison, no chronicle is made ; but there is mentioned the great impatience of all for the arrival of Iberville, due daily. A boat was stationed at Ship Island on watch for him, and on the eve of Twelfth Night the firing of cannon signalled over the water the good announcement to the waiting ears.

Sauvole hastened over to meet his commander with his report, — a good one, despite all his gloomy forebodings ; but four men dead, with all the illness, dissipation, and privation. Iberville returned with him to the fort, where he was received with salvos of artillery and with “all possible joy,” as the loyal Pennicaut writes. Iberville indeed came like a belated Santa Claus to his colonial family. To Sauvole and Bienville he brought the royal commissions of their new rank, — the latter insuring a pay of twelve hundred francs per annum. For the colony there were supplies, money, and reinforcements, — most notably, as he no doubt would have ranked them, sixty Canadian *coureurs de bois*, who had served with him



in Hudson Bay, a Jesuit priest to replace the Récollet father, and a royal commissary, who was to rank second only to Sauvole. There accompanied him also the Sieur Le Sueur, a geologist, with thirty workmen, who came to exploit a certain fabulous hill of green earth on the upper Mississippi; the after-celebrated Juchereau de St. Denis, a distinguished Canadian and a connection of Iberville's wife; the Sieur de Boisbriant also, celebrated afterwards in the annals of the colony; and Antoine Le Moyne de Châteauguay, his seventeen-year-old brother.

Iberville's stay at Biloxi was only long enough to select sixty men and make his preparations for another trip up the Mississippi.

Instead of risking another voyage through the mouth of the Mississippi, the two barges and three pirogues were carried into Lake Pontchartrain to the little bayou,¹ about four miles below Iberville Bayou (Manchac), which lead to the short portage into the Mississippi, shown by the guide during the other expedition. The barges evidently could not get through the sluggish shallow marsh


¹ A glance at the map of the lower Mississippi will show the very indefinite character of such a geographical indication. It would seem that the little bayou in question and the short portage must have been the Bayou St. John and the well-known Indian high road (which would now lead directly through New Orleans), preferred by early travellers as the safest and surest way into the Mississippi. Dupratz says he came through the Bayou Schoupic, and that the deserted village of the Quinipissas was on the bank of the Bayou St. John. Iberville puts this village (as seen above) a league and a half above his portage. Above or below Bayou St. John, Schoupic, or Ligonyon, or any other of the innumerable bayous of the region, it is evident that the ground traversed was in or very near the present limits of New Orleans.

stream. They were left in the lake, and Iberville and Bienville proceeded in their pirogues. Iberville describes the portage as about a league and a half long, one half of the distance knee-deep in mud and water, the other in good condition, the country covered partly by forest, partly by canebrake. He and Bienville visited a deserted village of the Quinipissas about a league and a half above their portage, upon a spot which was inundated very little or not at all. The abandoned fields were grown up with trees already two feet in circumference. Clearing a little space, Iberville made the first planting of sugar-cane in Louisiana; but the seed brought from St. Domingo was sour and yellow, and so came to nought.

The whole month of January was consumed in looking for a site for the proposed fort. There seemed none secure from overflow. Bienville was sent up to the Bayougoulas to learn from them what spots on the lower bank of the river were above high-water mark. Iberville, rejoining the barges, returned to his vessels, where he waited until the messenger brought word that Bienville was coming down the river with the Bayagoula chief, who would point out all the unoverflowed spots within fifteen leagues of the river's mouth.

The transport was put under way, and during a truce of the winds, safely entered the river. Three days afterwards, at midnight, the two brothers met on a point of land on the right bank (ascending) eighteen leagues from the mouth, which, the Bayagoula chief assured them, was not subject to inundation.

It was indeed one of the most attractive points in the region. An edge of open forest, six hundred paces wide, extended along the river bank for about three



leagues below them. Two leagues above was a forest of cypress, or cedars of Lebanon, as Iberville calls them, — the very wood for pirogues, and where pirogue-making was immediately commenced. Behind was an extended view of prairie land, studded with clusters of trees.

Work was begun at once upon the fort, planned to be a stout defence in case of emergency, — a twenty-eight foot square log building two stories high, machicolated. The powder-magazine was elevated five feet above the ground, and well banked with earth, top and sides.

About the middle of February, — an exceedingly cold February, even Iberville remarks, — while the clearing, cutting, and building were in busy progress, there arrived of an afternoon a visitor than whom no one on the continent could have been more useful or more welcome to Iberville ; this was Henry de Tonty, the friend and companion, and without question the most unselfish, loyal, straightforward, and intelligent pioneer France ever possessed in America. He had heard of the settlement at the mouth of the river, and came from his post on the Arkansas to make proffer of his services. A band of Canadians, loaded with peltry, from the country of the Illinois and Tamaroas accompanied him, attracted by the offers which Sauvole had disseminated among the Indians, especially to catch wandering *coureurs de bois* and attach them to the enterprise. Iberville immediately engaged them in his service, and found them a most providential reinforcement, as there was considerable sickness among his men, not a few dying of fevers contracted at St. Domingo, or most likely upon the spot.

Tonty here had the opportunity to discover the fraudulent manuscript imposed as his upon Iberville, and also


to rectify some of the latter's apprehensions gathered from the clerical Relations.

Iberville's projects up the Mississippi included an exploration of Red River, whose unknown course seemed to offer an inlet for enterprise against the Mexican gold and silver mines of the supine Spaniards. Tonty agreeing to accompany him, the finishing of the fort was left to the Canadian, Sieur de Maltot, and they set out, Bienville in advance, a forerunner to prepare ways and means.

At the portage of the Ligonyon (called for a short interval Ravine le Sueur), they came up with the geologist laboriously getting his men, boats, and provisions through from the lake into the river which was to conduct him to the chimerical treasures of green and blue earth piled into hills in the country whence it took its source. Iberville expresses his scepticism of this as well as the other schemes which an inherent love of the marvellous seemed to push France into fathering.

Arrived at the village of the Bayagoulas, the news of the English arming the Chickasaws was confirmed. Iberville's first plan was for Tonty, on his return to the Illinois, to entrap the English leaders into coming among the Tunicas, with the bait of trading with them, to arrest them and hand them over to a detail of Canadians, who, it is presumed, were competent to deal with them. But the English were found to be too numerous for this stratagem to be practically successful, and Iberville had to console himself with the promised determination to arm the Choctaws and unite all the Indians south of the Chickasaws in a solid confederacy for the French.

He had little difficulty in reconciling the Houmas with the Bayagoulas and inducing the former to return the



prisoners captured in so high-handed a manner. Speaking in their own manner to them, he says he expressed great grief and indignation at their making war upon the Bayagoulas, after the alliance so solemnly made between them all the year before. The Houmas demanded that the Bayagoulas should come to them to smoke the calumet of peace, fetching presents to ransom the prisoners, as the custom was. Iberville offered himself as proxy for his friends, and so the matter was concluded. The Houma village was reduced to half of the population of the previous year by an epidemic of the flux ; but there was an accession to it of a band of forty " Little " Tensas, as they were called, — a volunteer corps to assist the Houmas against the Bayagoulas. These Little Tensas inhabited generally a territory about three leagues west of the Houmas, but they were an errant tribe which lived entirely upon game. It was some of them who, the year before, had told Iberville about Red River and the number of tribes living along its course, professing to have been through the country and to know it well ; and it had been Iberville's intention to secure guides from them. But now, do what he could, he could induce none of them to accompany him as far as the Caddadaquios. They now protested that Red River was rafted and completely unnavigable, and that the only road they knew to the Caddadaquios and Natchitoches, the only one they ever travelled, was by land and through the village of the " Big " Tensas, above the Natchez. Although from its mouth Red River appeared to Iberville to be easily navigable, he did not dare, in face of the many ramifications ascribed to it, venture in it without a guide. He determined to pro-

ceed to the Big Tensas village, and from there journey overland to the Caddodaquios and Natchitoches, following Red River, if he then desired it, on his return to the Mississippi, in pirogues which they could easily construct by the way. Giving the Houmas a half-bushel of corn, some peas, and some orange, apple, and cotton seed to plant (the first cotton-seed planted in Louisiana), he gathered together his men, scattered hunting over the country, and sent for the pirogues waiting for him at the mouth of Red River, and set them all in motion up the Mississippi towards the Natchez and Tensas.

The great stream still meandered before them, twisting like a huge paraph over the country. The pirogues paddled against the monotonous yellow currents which offered no novelties to them, except the ceaseless destruction and reconstruction of a monster water-way at work, — the freshly verdured batture formations against one bank, the caving land of the other, with its half-submerged forests peering above the thick waters. Slow collecting rafts filling up one curve, the deflected currents hurrying away to the next point to gnaw out another. From time to time a patient fisherman would be seen crouched on his little moored gunwale catching, when luck was with him, catfish and minnows, or carp and sardines, as Iberville called them. Here, one hundred and twenty-five leagues from the sea, they came across the innocent causes of Iberville's tragic perplexities and of the apparent priestly mendacities — the two little half-league-large islands which formed the three branches or forks of the Relations, but placed by them sixty-five leagues farther down.

At the Natchez landing, eighteen leagues above the

Houmas, a messenger was sent to apprise the chief of their coming. He responded by sending his brother, escorted by twenty-five men, with the calumet of peace and an invitation to the village. Climbing to the summit of the steep bluff, then covered with magnificent forest trees, Iberville gazed upon the beautiful rural landscape which he proposed affixing to the picturesque kingdom of France,—a landscape upon which afterwards French rapine was to bring a washing of blood. “It was a country,” he says, “of plains and prairies, filled with little hills and groves of trees, oaks some of them, with roads intercrossing from village to village and from cabin to cabin,—a country resembling France not a little.”

Half way to the village the chief appeared, ceremoniously advancing, surrounded by his body-guard,—twenty large, well-made men. He was rather a thin man, about five feet three or four inches, with an intelligent countenance, and, according to Iberville, he was the most absolute Indian monarch he, Iberville, had ever seen. At that time he was suffering from the flux which shortly afterwards killed him.

All the men of the tribe appeared to be handsome and well-made, but they were very lazy,—very civil, but very lazy.

The village differed from the other villages visited, only in being handsomer and better built. The cabin of the chief stood eminent on a spacious mound ten feet high; facing it was the temple; around, in an oval, were placed the cabins, enclosing a handsome open space. A small running stream near by furnished the water.

Iberville found a letter there from Montigny, who had returned to his Tensas mission but three days before. The priest stated that he had visited all the cabins of the Natchez, about four hundred, scattered over eight leagues of country, along the course of the creek, and that he had baptized one hundred and eighty children, from one to four years old.

Iberville presented the chief with a gun and ammunition, a capote, a blanket, and the usual quantum of hatchets, knives, beads, and small articles for distribution. The chief presented the French officers each with a small white cross and a pearl, which, with the consciousness of the expectations in France founded upon pearl fisheries in Louisiana, Iberville treats with rather ungracious criticism. He remarks that the Natchez language was very different from the Houma, but that he was enabled to converse with the chief through his brother Bienville, who was beginning to make himself understood in Bayagoula, Houma, Chickasaw, and Colapissa.

Leaving Bienville and the rest of the party at the Natchez to get and pound corn for the expedition, Iberville set out with six men in one pirogue for the great village of the Tensas, to make the other arrangements for the overland journey. A day and a half brought him to the Tensas landing. The pirogue, with two men, was left at the river, while Iberville with the other four struck out through the woods in search of the lake where they were to find pirogues to reach the village. But the guide lost his way, and the party, having no provisions with them, passed a supperless night in the woods. In the morning they were more successful. They discovered the lake, and in answer to their gun-

shots, they found four Indians awaiting them with a pirogue. The lake, a mere curving branch of water, cut off, at a distant date, through some caprice, by the Mississippi, was not more than twelve miles long to a mile and a half wide.¹ Paddling through two leagues of it, they reached at midday the village, — a group of about a hundred and twenty cabins, scattered along the shore, extending some six miles, the greater number concentrated towards that end of the lake which approached nearer to the Mississippi, and opposite a small outlet, along which also were built some cabins. The tribe at one time had been very numerous, but at the time of Iberville's visit, like all the Indian tribes he mentions, seemed to be suffering a rapid and fatal decrease, and there were barely three hundred warriors left.

The missionary Montigny, fired with zeal by recent encouragement from his savage flock, was, with his two French assistants, busy building a church and a dwelling for himself, — indulging, no doubt, in those prophetic visions of the nearing dawn of Christianity, which must have furnished the only roseate hue to the future horizon of such as he. But like too many of such visions, this was a baseless fabric, to be destroyed by a demonstration of barbaric fanaticism which the French spectators relate with horror.

¹ The relative positions of Lake Tensas and the Mississippi River furnish Thomassy ("Géologie Pratique de la Louisiane") with an important fact in favour of his argument on the gradual displacement of the river from the west to the east. In Franquelin's map of the voyages of La Salle, 1684, Tensas Lake is represented as communicating directly with the river. In 1700, Iberville found it one league to the west of the river. In 1859, Thomassy placed it several miles to the west.

A terrific storm broke out during the night. Lightning struck the old temple, setting it afire. It was consumed entirely. With a readiness and certainty which would have done credit to his Christian competitor, the venerable Indian patriarch who performed the functions of high priest, attributed the disaster to divine wrath because, after the recent demise of their king, the Tensas, under the teachings and influence of the French priest, and in obedience to their own satisfaction, had omitted the human sacrifice enjoined by their religion. It was the opportunity of all others to crush a rival and restore a supremacy. Standing by the flames, raging through the elemental chaos of rain, wind, thunder, and lightning, the savage interpreter of divine justice, raising his voice to a dominating distinctness, called repeatedly: "Women! bring your children and offer them in sacrifice to the Great Spirit to appease him!" Five devotees responded, and five papposes, strapped in their swaddling clothes, were thrown into the heart of the burning pile. Even in their primitive intelligence, this was regarded as the supreme effort of human sacrifice, and the five mothers from henceforth were sanctified and consecrated in the community. Proud of his victory, the old priest led them in triumph to the cabin of the new king, where the old men of the village assembled to do them honour, praising, caressing them, clothing them in white mantles woven from the fibre of the bark of the mulberry-tree, and fastening long plumes in their hair. The adulatory attentions continued for eight days, during which, day and night, they sat in state before the king's cabin, maintaining their publicity during the dark hours by singing aloud, and every afternoon formed the

principal feature in the dedicatory services which were to change the cabin into a temple. Iberville, who had gone to the Mississippi to meet Bienville and his party, and so had missed the burning of the temple, returned in time for the dedicatory ceremonies which took the form of a rude, symbolical representation of the recent disaster and expiatory sacrificial act, — a sacrificial play, as it were.

Every afternoon of the eight days, about six o'clock, three youths, about twenty years of age, fetched a fagot apiece, which was thrown down before the door of the new temple. The temple-keeper, an old man, would pile them into a pyre, and going into the temple, would reappear with a fagot of canes lighted from the sacred fire within. The patriarchal priest, observing from a distance, would then slowly advance with a solemn step, chanting, and beating an accompaniment with a stick upon a leathern cushion which he carried. He was followed by the five sacrificing mothers, bearing bundles of wet moss. As the procession approached, the temple-keeper applied his torch to the fagot-heap. The priest led the way, chanting three times around the blaze; the women then threw themselves upon it, and beat it out with their bundles of wet moss. The priest then led them to the river, where they bathed in public. Vanity seems to have grown also under the stimulant of faith, and to have become an accessory, if not before, after the fact; for during the procession around the fire, Iberville detected symptoms of levity, and desire to laugh and talk among the fair postulants, for which the old priest severely reprimanded them.

A pain in his knee that disabled Iberville from walk-

ing, vetoed his being of the Red River expedition. He confided its command to Bienville. After seeing him start off with his Ouachita guide, six Tensas, and twenty Canadians, he made his preparations to return to the mouth of the river. Montigny, with his attendants and possessions, accompanied him. Against such a manifestation of diabolical interference and such a revival of pagan zeal and enthusiasm as he had witnessed, the missionary felt powerless and hopeless. The Indian medicine-man had completely routed him and his humane doctrines. Among the Natchez, weather permitting, he calculated upon a more grateful harvest.

The Natchez chief lay dying, and in the great distress of his people, Iberville had no opportunity for consultation about the stand to be taken against the English-inspired Chickasaws. But Tonty, who did not take his departure until they reached the Houmas' landing, was charged with presents for the Tunicas and for the Chickasaw chief, who was shortly to visit the Tunicas, and who was to be made to understand through the Tunica missionary, Davion, that the French were a fixture at the mouth of the river, and that it would be not only more profitable to trade with them than with the English, but that in case of a hostile attitude by the Chickasaws, the Indians of the lower country would be armed with guns and united in one band against them. Iberville made a short stop at the Bayagoula village; leaving it at noon one day, he reached the fort the next evening at nine o'clock, his bark canoe accomplishing the distance, one hundred and twenty-six miles, in thirty-three hours.

The work upon the fort had advanced but slowly,

most of the men having been and being ill ; the sowings of corn and peas, however, had come up finely. The next day Iberville visited a little stream which ran to the rear of the fort, hoping to find it a practicable passage through to his vessels in the Sound. He sent *Sieur Duguay* with three men in a canoe to explore it, while he in a canoe with two men tried a portage two leagues above the fort, on which he had also ventured some hope. But he found it so difficult that he was obliged to give it up. He returned to the fort in a pretty hot fever, he says. The fever, continuing, retained him in the insalubrious spot ; and in fact it was this tropical illness, caused by over-exertion and exposure, which made the breach in the hardy Canadian's constitution through which death, in the same latitude, finally entered. He sent to *Sauvole* for the bulls, cows, calves, hogs, fowls, to stock the new establishment, and for the other necessary provisions. In default of communicating bayou or portage, he chronicles with satisfaction that the transport brought them from *Ship Island* through the mouth of the river safely and quickly in thirty-six hours. The transport also brought a budget of news from *Biloxi* and *Ship Island*.

De la Riola, the governor of *Pensacola*, to impose upon or intimidate the French, had paid a visit to *Ship Island* and *Biloxi* in all the panoply of his power, in a frigate of twenty-four cannon and one hundred and forty men, accompanied by a smaller vessel of six cannon and forty men, and a sloop armed with six swivel-guns and twenty men. He had come, he majestically informed the French commander, in pursuance of the orders of the Viceroy of Mexico, to drive the French

away, supposing them to represent merely some trading community ; but as they were, on the contrary, representatives of a crowned head, his orders were not to molest them.

Surgères, Sauvole, the officers, and men proved equal to the occasion. The ponderous and unwelcome visitors were received with honours, and regaled with a generosity that must have disappointed as well as astonished them. No Pensacola revelations of weakness, dissatisfaction, and misery took place at Ship Island or Biloxi. During the visit, which lasted four days, the garrison were kept in gala uniform and on gala rations. Traces of sickness and privation were sedulously hidden ; corn was banished from sight ; while the jealously guarded stores of wine and flour were lavished with contemptuous prodigality. Laughter and gayety flowed with the ease and abundance of spontaneity from the highest to the lowest, and for the nonce the little obscure anchorages gave a sparkle of that glitter which befitted a royal post of that dazzling splendour, the Sun-King.

Despite his brilliant entertainment, however, the Spanish functionary, in taking leave, delivered a formal written protest against the establishment, which he said the French had made in the possessions of the king of Spain, contrary to the good understanding which existed between the two Crowns ; and he begged the French to make no further settlements on that coast until he had communicated with his Spanish Majesty, which he purposed to do directly. He sailed away as majestically as he had arrived. But as a frugal ancestor of the Sun-King was fond of remarking, "*Quand orgueil marche devant, dommage marche derrière.*"

It was seven days later, Surgères had sailed to France, and De Ricouart, left in command of Ship Island, beheld an open boat approaching from the sea. The figures of men in distress were made out in it. It neared; it landed; the figures were the late guests, — the Spanish commander and two of his officers. Stripped to his vest, famishing with a five days' hunger and thirst whetted rather than assuaged by one small bit of chocolate, exhausted with five days' unremitted labour, and with want of sleep from a like period of combat with the mosquitoes, — De la Riola related his pitiful adventure. A gale had struck his fleet, and all — frigate, smaller vessel, and sloop — had been shipwrecked on Chandeleur Islands. Everything, even to the wardrobes of the officers, had been lost.

Again the French were equal to the occasion, or, as De Ricouart puts it, equal to the requirements of the honour of France upon such occasions. Messengers were despatched with the news to Pensacola; boats were sent to rescue the miserable crews perishing on the exposed sand-bars. Food, drink, and clothes were prepared, and De la Riola himself was equipped, *cap-a-pie*, from the wardrobe of Iberville. Sauvole immediately made a visit of condolence, with offers of service and a present of handsome linen and a gun. De la Riola insisted upon departing at once and relieving his hosts of the onerous charge of his entire equipage. But he was given to understand that he did the French injustice if he supposed he incommoded them in the least, and he was so pressed to remain until he and his men were completely refreshed and rested, that he consented. When he returned to Pensacola, part of the

crew were transported in French boats, and all were provided with three weeks' refreshment.

At the fort, Iberville's fever continued. He found that during high tide the water covered the land all around him. A south wind and heavy rains increased the inundation until it was two feet deep. When it subsided, the land was such a mass of mud that the men could not walk upon it.

As soon as he was able, the sick commandant returned through the passes to his vessel, reaching it on the 15th of April.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the mean time, Bienville was prosecuting his journey from the Tensas village to the limits of northwestern Louisiana. His journal is a fragment, a third of it, the last part, being undecipherable from damage by water; and it contains at best only a bare record of distance made; but a few extracts from it will give an idea what the journey was, and will also serve to introduce the journalist, who appears for the first time in these Relations speaking *in propria persona*:—

“On the 22d of March I left the village at nine o'clock in the morning, with twenty-two Canadians, six Tensas, and one Ouachita. I marched all day in an overflowed country, the water half-way up the leg, or to the knees. In the evening I arrived at the bank of a little river about seventy paces wide and very deep, four and a half leagues distant, to the west, from the Tensas. I found there some Ouachitas, with several pirogues partly loaded with salt. They were abandoning their village to go and live with the Tensas. They had come from their home by little rivers navigable only in high water.

“23d. In the morning I crossed the river in the pirogue of the Indians. A half league from there, towards the west, I came to a river thirty paces wide, running north and south, which I had a great deal of trouble in crossing, not finding wood to make rafts, on which to cross the baggage.”

They usually swam or waded the streams, pushing the rafts before them, after firing off their guns to scare away the alligators, for fear of their attacking them in the water, which they find, *en passant*, very cold.

"The rain drove us to camp early. The Tensas deserted on account of the bad roads and cold weather; they do not like walking naked through the water.

"24th. We set out at sunrise, the weather pretty cold. Three quarters of a league towards the west I came to two little rivers, which we crossed on trees that we threw over from one side to the other. Two leagues from there we came to a beautiful dry prairie, . . . at the end of which was a river about forty paces wide, with a strong current and full of crocodiles. We crossed it with rafts. . . .

"25th. . . . Marched all day through woods, prairies, and savannas, always, without intermission, in water up to the knees, waist, and sometimes to the neck. A man of medium height is at great disadvantage in such countries. I see some of my men with the water only up to their waists, while I and others are nearly swimming, pushing our bundles before us on rafts, to keep them from getting wet. I camped at five o'clock in the evening, later than we wished, not finding any dry land except on the edge of a prairie, where there seemed to be good hunting, and where my men killed a beef.

"26th. Remained in this good hunting place, where my men killed three deer and twelve turkeys, very fat. The 'bloody flux' attacked two of my men.

"27th. Set out in the morning, leaving at the camp two sick men and a comrade to take care of them. A half league from the camp came to a river thirty-five paces wide. Crossed it with rafts. Two leagues from that river we came to another one twenty-five paces wide, which we also crossed. A quarter of a league from this river

we came to a swamp a quarter of a league wide, which we crossed as we did the river. The water was very cold. We camped near by, on the border of a little lake. I calculate that we have made to-day four leagues, west-south-west, and are very tired.

"28th, Sunday. I arrived at the village of the Ouachitas. After having gone two leagues and a half towards the west, we swam across a swamp five hundred paces broad, and traversed several prairies separated by strips of forest, and came to the village of the Ouachitas. This village is on the banks of the River Marne, or Sablonnière [Red River], or rather on a branch of it. There are not more than five cabins there, and about seventy men. The river in this place may be about one hundred and eighty paces wide, and with as much current as the Mississippi. It seems to be deep. . . . It rained all day.

29th. Rained until mid-day, when I set out with a Natchito to guide me to his village. We crossed a river¹ very broad and rather dry. From there we fell into a wet country, which lasted a league and a half. We came to two little rivers very rapid, which we had to swim across; the water in them was very cold. From there we traversed a swamp, at the end of which we met six Natchitoches who were going to the Coroas to sell salt. The last rains make the road very difficult for us.

"31st. Rained a part of the day. . . . Camped on the edge of a marsh. . . . I am running short of provisions. Three of my men still continue to walk, but they have had fevers for two days.

"April 1. Rained in torrents all night, and this morning until ten o'clock. . . . Our guide made us make a very large *détour* to get around the swamp. . . . We crossed eight little rivers from ten to twelve paces wide, and very deep;

¹ The journal says three leagues wide. Evidently a mistake or an omission; probably three quarters of a league is meant.

we cut down trees for bridges; after which we came to several swamps and sloughs, in which the water came up to the waist and arm-pits. We walked until night without being able to find in all that time one arpent proper for a camping-ground. We see no traces of game, and are reduced to two small, thin sagamities a day.

"2*d*. Rained all night and until two o'clock in the day. We were only able to make a league and a half to-day, because of the bad roads through the swamp; the water was as high as the waist at least. We came to six little rivers that we had to cross on narrow trees at least two feet under the water. The cane grows so thick in this country that we had to force our way through, which fatigued us very much, having passed the two last nights in the rain, failing to find large trees from which to strip the bark for cabins. . . .

"3*d*. Rained all night in torrents.

"5*th*. A half league from our camp we came to a swamp, a quarter of a league wide, where there was no bottom at six feet, and which was filled with wood, out of which we made rafts to carry our clothes. We were all day in crossing it. The water was very cold, several of my men were seized with the cold, and had to climb up in the trees and stay there to recover; four passed nearly the whole day up in them, until rafts were sent to fetch them away. My men and I were never so tired in our lives. . . . This is good work for tempering the fires of youth. But we never stop singing and laughing, to show our guides that fatigue does not trouble us, and that we are different men from the Spaniards.

"6*th*. We made three leagues and a half west-southwest, when we came to a large lake which we were obliged to go around, making two leagues and a half south-southeast. . . . We came to two cabins of Natchitoches, who took to flight on seeing us. Our guide reassured them, and they came to us; they were well treated. We can only get to their vil-

lage (they have but two villages) in pirogues, on account of the overflow of the river.

"7th. I took two pirogues and left with the half of my men, . . . and arrived at the village of the Souchitionys, where I was well received."

He describes this village as consisting of fifteen cabins in all. The river in front of it was very broad, filled with driftwood, and four fathoms deep in the high water.

"I immediately sent the pirogues to fetch the rest of my men. . . . The Natchitoches are about a league distant, settled in cabins along Red River.

"8th. All the men arrived. I put the Indians to work pounding corn.

"9th. Rained all day; the women could not finish pounding the Indian corn. The warriors came to fetch me, and carried me on their shoulders into a kind of hall covered with palmettos, where they were all assembled to sing the calumet. I gave them and the chief of the Natchitoches a little present and a calumet of peace.

"10th. Rained all day; the chief promised me his son to conduct me to the Yataches.

"11th. Easter; left in pirogues to get over three leagues of bad country, north-northeast of the village. . . .

"12th. Left our pirogues, and marched by land one league north, where we found a large lake six leagues long and a half league wide. . . .

"13th. Crossed five little rivers, very close together, which flowed into this lake. Went to the north-northeast a league and a half, and fell upon a beaten track, which we followed, going five leagues and a half west-northwest through open forests and rivers, finding springs and good hunting; deer and turkeys.

"14th. Continued to march. Came to a wooded swamp,

very deep, and so long that our guides said that we should have to sleep four nights to get around it, but that about a league to the south there were three cabins on the bank of a river where there were pirogues. I put my men immediately to hollowing out a pirogue with our tomahawks. It was finished in five hours, large enough to hold six men, whom I sent to hunt for the Indian cabins and the pirogues. My men went hunting and killed six deer.

"15th. My men returned, bringing me the three pirogues, in which we embarked; and having made four leagues north-northeast, arrived on the other side of the lake, where we slept.

"16th. Left our pirogues and marched the length of the lake on a ridge of fine country and forest, where we killed, walking along, five deer, and made three leagues and a half to the northwest, crossing several hills pretty high. . . . We fired several shots to notify the Indians on the other side of a lake a league away, in the west-southwest. Five men came in a pirogue to discover who we were. Our guide called them and made them come to us. I embarked in their pirogue with two of my men, leaving three Indians in my place. I went to their village, which was covered with water. They were living on scaffolds. There were fifteen cabins scattered around there of the tribe of the Nakasas, who live on the banks of Red River. . . .

"17th. I sent the pirogues for my men, who arrived at midday. I set out immediately in two pirogues to go to the Yataches, cutting across the woods the shortest way, the river having overflowed the country for two leagues' distance. Night overtook us opposite a little village of the Nakasas, — eight cabins on the left bank of Red River, where we slept. The river is a hundred and sixty paces wide at this place, and has as much current as the Mississippi.

"18th. Sent three pirogues to fetch the rest of my men.

There is not an arpent of land around these cabins that is not overflowed. I found very little corn. . . .

"19th. My men arrived. It was too late to go to the Yataches, which made the Indians very angry, making us understand that they had no more corn to give us. . . . All the Indians about here are tattooed around the eyes and on the nose, with three stripes on the chin.

"20th. We left in two old pirogues, the ends of which were stopped with earth; . . . followed the river, which makes several bends; . . . arrived at the village of the Yataches. The cabins are scattered along the river for the space of two leagues. Upon our arrival, the Indians, having heard from an Indian arrived a little before us, that we wished provisions and pirogues, had hidden their corn and pirogues. I threatened them if they did not provide us with them that I would remain there. I sent my men, at the same time, through the cabins. From here to the Caddodaquios, in summer, they calculate it as only two days' journey.

"21st. The Indians giving me to understand that they would give me the pirogues and provisions, to procure greater diligence I sent a man into each cabin with beads and other trifles to get the corn pounded promptly, and I went with two men in a pirogue to search for other pirogues the length of the river. I only found three, which I bought with two hatchets apiece. The water fell to-day two feet. I went into forty different cabins the length of the river.

"22d. Embarked for the Caddodaquios, who are northwest from here. Although the Indians tell me that it will take ten days and ten nights to get there by the river, I cannot believe it, as it is only two days' journey by land, on which I cannot travel, on account of the high water; but being once started, the guides, seeing me determined to go there, will, as they have done in several places, tell me the truth about the distance. . . ."

The Indians persisting in their assurance that it would take ten days and ten nights to reach the Caddodaquios, and as the current in the river was very strong, and he had only twenty days left to the date at which he was due at the vessels, besides several of his men being disabled from maladies resulting from their exposure and fatigue, Bienville adopted the resolution of turning back, and not endeavoring to reach the limit of the Spanish possessions. He was enabled, however, from questioning the Indians, to form an idea of what these possessions were, and where they were. Several Caddodaquios, a Naonadiche, and a Nadaco, whom he talked to, had been to a Spanish settlement five leagues and a half to the west of the Caddodaquios village, where there were white, black, and mulatto men, women, and children engaged in cultivating the land. This settlement was near the village of the Naonadiches. The Indians said that the Spaniards often came to the Caddodaquios on horseback, to the number of thirty or forty, but that they never slept there. Bienville applied himself particularly to finding out if the Spaniards had any mines about there, or dug in the earth for silver. He was told no, that they only raised corn, that they had money like the pieces Bienville showed them, that they staked it on cards, some of them stamping their feet and tearing the cards up when they lost.

On the 23d of April the party began to descend Red River in four pirogues. After this the journal becomes unintelligible. Cutting across the country, the party struck the banks of the Mississippi on the 11th of May. Here continual rain arrested them four days, and they had to give three days to hunting, being

entirely out of provisions. On the 18th of May they arrived at the ships.

Iberville mentions that they brought the news of further infractions of the peace so recently sworn by their allies. The Bayagoulas had arisen and massacred their village associates, the Mongoulachas, whose empty cabins and dispossessed fields had been filled by an importation of Colapissas and Sioux. Iberville says that the event gives him a good title to the greater portion of the Bayagoula village, for it belonged to the Mongoulacha chief, who sold it to him, Iberville, with all his other villages near the sea

Montigny and Davion, arriving about the same time, brought further disquieting confirmation of the tamperings of the English with the Indians to the north of the French ; and Tonty wrote of the efforts he had made in carrying out Iberville's purpose to frustrate these tamperings, by extolling the superior trading advantages the French could offer to these same Indians over the English.

Iberville made one more visit to his new fort on the Mississippi, to regulate, as he said, a great many affairs there.

Putting Bienville in command, he returned to Ship Island, and sailed for France on the 28th of May. Montigny, the priest, sailed with him.

CHAPTER IX.

1700-1701.

BIENVILLE received no written instructions from Iberville, as Sauvole did, and he seems to have made only verbal reports. But notwithstanding there is no reference to, or publication of, any written correspondence between the brothers, one is made aware that even at this time there did exist between them, as between all the Canadians engaged in the Louisiana enterprise, private communication of some sort for the distribution of intelligence, and a tacit agreement as to the furtherance of their policy on what the French called their projects. The governor of Canada openly accused them of such a combination, which the French officers sent at different times to the colony, consecrated their small energies to denounce and thwart, although offering no better substitute by their own conduct.

As has been said, Bienville kept no journal; but glimpses are obtained of him in his handsomely designated fort of the Mississippi by the casual mention of others. Sauvole gives us the laconic statement of him that he had great trouble to subsist there. Father Gravier, of the Society of Jesus, who came there in 1701 from his post among the Illinois, to assist Father du Ru (a Jesuit brought from France by Iberville),

makes a pen picture of the place which gives ample justification to Sauvole's comment ; and this was before the fever came, with the contribution of distress. This picture of what was accomplished, forms an interesting "pendant" to Iberville's letter to the Minister of Marine, written on the same spot, detailing what he intended to accomplish.

"There is no fort," writes Gravier, "nor bastion, intrenchment, nor redoubt; all consists of a battery of six guns, six and eight pounders, on the brow of the bluff, and of five or six cabins separate from each other, and covered with palm-leaves. M. de Bienville has quite a nice little house there. I perceived on arriving that they began to cry famine, and that the breadstuffs began to run out,—which obliged me to take to Indian food, so as to be a burden to none, and to put up with corn, without meat or fish, till the vessels come, which are hardly expected before the end of March. . . . The wheat which had been planted here was already quite high when the inundations caused by a furious swell of the sea in August swept it away. The garden was hardly more successful, besides there being a great quantity of black snakes that ate the lettuces and other vegetables to the root. . . . The high waters overflow so furiously here that they have been four months in the water, often knee-deep outside their cabins, although the Indians had assured them that the place was never inundated. . . . They could not make the first settlement in a spot where there are more mosquitoes than here. They are here almost the whole year. In sooth, they have given us but little truce for seven or eight days; at this moment they sting me in close ranks; and in the month of December, when you ought not to be troubled by them, there was such a furious quantity that I could not write a word without having my hands and face covered, and it was impos-

sible for me to sleep the whole night. They stung me so in one eye that I thought I should lose it. The French of this fort told me that from the month of March there is such a prodigious quantity of them that the air was darkened with them, and that they could not distinguish each other ten paces apart. . . . The arrival of the vessels is expected from day to day.¹

"As for Fort Biloxi," he goes on to say, "besides the air being better and the country more open, all kinds of garden vegetables can be raised there; deer are near, and hunting good; and to temper the heat, every day, an hour or two before noon, there comes from the sea a breeze that cools the air. Only the water is not very good; it is a little spring that supplies them, for that of the bay is more than brackish, and is not drinkable. There are more than a hundred and twenty men in the fort."

The superiority of his condition over that of Bienville does not seem to have been much of a solace to Sauvole, — at least it does not appear so in his journal. He complains of the state of scarcity before the arrival of relief from France; and in fact he seems to have suffered not only for lack of food, drink, health, and peace, but for lack of everything that could have made such a lot bearable to such a man.

He struggled manfully through the instructions left by Iberville. St. Denis, with twelve Canadians, was sent to continue the exploration of the Red River country, with orders to push as far towards the west — consequently as close to New Mexico — as possible, where it was thought, if anywhere in Louisiana, gold and silver mines were to be found. A Spaniard was to guide the party, and Indians on the route, hostile to the Spaniards, were

¹ Munsell, vol. viii.

to be carefully conciliated. Maps were to be made of the country, and any mines discovered (it is presumed no matter how near the Spanish lines), were to be immediately taken possession of, in the name of the king of France. Other work was provided in abundance for Biloxi, — the testing of the durability of the different forest woods, charred and uncharred, in the waters of the bay; the gathering of pearls and of buffalo wool;¹ the Mobile River was to be explored, and a visit of reconnoissance made to the much-talked-of Choctaws. But Sauvole found, as the summer came on, another and different programme laid down for him by a commander fully as arbitrary as Iberville.

He chronicles once and awhile some little episode that makes a pleasant interpolation in the general monotony of his complaints. The Tohomes and Mobile Indians had come to ask help and protection in some of their inter-tribal disputes, and had gained both by furnishing supplies of corn. These savages described the lands lying along their river, the Mobile, as being the finest in the country, and expressed an ardent desire that the French should establish themselves upon them, being, of course, on bad terms with the Spaniards, who had killed one of their men.

The long-expected vessel, the "*Enflammée*," at length arrived, the last of May; but she appears to have brought only transitory relief, for a transport was sent not long afterwards to St. Domingo for both food and medicine.

¹ There was an idea, emanating from France, of herding the buffaloes in pens near Biloxi, and domesticating them for their wool.

Among the passengers of the "Enflammée" was one of the products of that sensational age, — Mathieu Sâgea†, a growth of the Hennepin order, although, being a mere fictionist, a more harmless specimen. His story, a fantastically wondrous one, of a voyage up the Mississippi some twenty years before, and of his discoveries thereupon of strange countries, peoples, customs, and treasures of precious stones and wealth galore, had found credence with Pontchartrain, who consigned him and a manuscript copy of his inventions forthwith to Sauvole, who received stringent orders to furnish twenty-four pirogues and one hundred Canadians, and expedite the glowing author with all haste into his realm of fancy. The Canadians, who knew their America better than Pontchartrain did his man, denounced the flimsy imposture to Sauvole, who also drew his own conclusions from the manuscript. Pontchartrain's orders were obeyed as to the making of the pirogues, but haste was otherwise made very slowly; "Sâgea†," writes Sauvole, in the humour of the situation, "acting the impatient all the time over the delay, convinced that if a start is not made by September, he will be forced, on account of the ice, to pass his winter with the Illinois." Shortly afterwards the arrival of Tonty is recorded. The rainy season set in, and sickness was not long in making its appearance, reaching its worst about the 1st of July, and attacking particularly the Canadians, who were nevertheless not a whit more orderly on that account. Sauvole waxes indignant over their mutinous conduct and indisposition to work. "I give my assurance that for the least task I have to go myself and get them out of their beds, and I dare not quit them until they have finished

what I wish accomplished." Such men, he says, cost too much; and although he recognizes their vivacity, strength, and quickness when the task pleases them, French hirelings would be preferable. An Englishman, settled among the Chickasaws, had been killed and plundered by Canadian *voyageurs*; three Canadians, travelling in Carolina, had, on the contrary, been well received by the English. Le Sueur arrived from the country of the Sioux with the seluccas Iberville had loaned him, loaded with green earth from his mine, and several specimens of copper, which he shipped to France on the "Enflammée." Sauvole cites this success with his Frenchmen in favour of the advantages of French against Canadian labour.

Sauvole charged the priests going up the river to their mission work among the Natchez, to buy and send corn to him, and also to send an invitation to Father Marest to come down the river from his station among the Illinois, and assist in the work of the new settlement. The Jesuit Du Rhu, instead of endeavouring to alleviate the general moral and physical discomfort, seems to have made use of his spiritual powers in just the opposite effort, "showing himself," Sauvole writes, on this, as on other occasions, of a frivolous, unaccommodating character, getting into trouble with all the officers, without being able to stand the least remonstrance, to such a degree, even, that to revenge himself (for such a remonstrance, presumably) he tried to draw the men away from the obedience due him, Sauvole.

The "Enflammée" sailed for France. The transport, which had been sent to St. Domingo for food and medicine, brought only twenty-two barrels of flour, and

a few of wine, — a supply which could not go far, particularly in the overplus of men in the fort. Canadian *voyageurs*, to the number of sixty, had travelled down the river to the fort, with their accumulations of peltry, in hopes of trade and refreshment of their rude necessities ; but Sauvole, obeying the orders dictated by the growing jealousy and discontent of Canada towards the new colony, would not allow them to ship one hair by the “*Enflammée*.” They paid, Sauvole says, their tribute to the epidemic, and although they did not deserve it, he could not help succouring them.

Sauvole himself paid his tribute also to the epidemic. His last entry in the journal is dated Aug. 4, 1701. A simple paragraph by La Harpe and a curt mention by Iberville record that he died just eighteen days afterwards, on the 22d of August. One wishes some, if even conventional, term of regret or esteem for the young commander, some testimony to his appearance and character, if not to his work and influence ; but his own fragmentary journals and one commendatory sentence by Iberville are all that remain to fix the personality of the young ensign of the “*Marin*,” “the relative of M. de Polastron, commandant of St. Malo,” whom we call the first governor of Louisiana. Bienville immediately left the fort of the Mississippi to take command at Biloxi ; Iberville carried his fever with him to France. It hung upon him some time in La Rochelle, delaying his report to the Minister of Marine. In January, 1701, he was in Paris three weeks, personally pushing the affairs of his establishment, and working upon a paper which, if its argument had succeeded with the French and Spanish Governments, would have placed those

affairs indeed in a promising light, and changed the history of the Gulf of Mexico. From the Spanish Government he wished to obtain the cession of Pensacola, and from the French such a regular system of fortification and arming of Indians along the Mississippi and its tributaries as would hold them beyond peradventure to France, and establish a solid bulwark of French domination straight through the continent from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, — a bulwark which, while it would bar the West to the English, would furnish such a vantage-ground of aggression into the East that it would be a mere question of time when they, the English, would be confined to a thin strip along the Atlantic coast.

Whether Iberville, with his keen sagacity, saw that Canada was a foredoomed loss to France and gain to England, and he consequently sought to create an equivalent and counterpoise in the erection and solidification of a French, or at least French and Spanish, power in the southern end of the continent; whether he really dreaded the encroachments of the English upon Alabama and Florida, the inability of the Spaniards to hold them, and their gradual yielding to the English, who, pushing west and south, would close in around the French possessions of Louisiana until they would be left hanging, feebly dangling, as it were, from Canada upon the thread of the Mississippi, which could at any moment be severed in a score of places by the English or Anglo-Indians; whether, therefore, Iberville was loyally minded to the Spaniards, or, holding the Gulf, as he claimed, from La Salle's bay, on the coast of Texas, to Mobile in Alabama, with the intermediary mouth of the Mississippi and the good anchorage of Ship Island, he



sought by specious reasons to obtain from the French king of Spain Pensacola, which would not only extend the French coast-line, but guarantee the French domination over the Gulf of Mexico and supervision of the route of the Spanish galleons, and furnish a latch-key to Vera Cruz, — whether, as has been said, Iberville was loyally minded to the Spaniards, or intended to enact towards them the *rôle* of the English towards the French in Canada, is a question to be decided when his own life is written.

His paper was submitted to the king of Spain, who in his turn submitted it to the Junta of War and the Indies. The Junta, however, far from being convinced by the Canadian's careful enumeration and recapitulation of the reasons why Spain could not hold her possessions against the English, and of the great profit to be gained by ceding them to France, not only negatived the whole proposition, but characterized Iberville's possession of the mouth of the Mississippi as an usurpation, and advised the offering to him and his men the simple choice of changing their allegiance to the Crown of Spain, or of being driven out as adventurers and interlopers, appealing to the indisputable investiture accorded to the monarchy of Spain in the New World by the bull of Alexander VI. Pending the negotiation, Iberville loaded his frigate, the "*Renommée*," with the necessary supplies for Biloxi and the fort of the Mississippi, and made a memorandum for the Minister of Marine of what would be required for the proper arming and fortification of Pensacola, should the Spanish Government consent to its cession. Should it not consent, — which Iberville says would be an act of obstinacy on its part, and of great

ignorance, for the English, with the aid of the inland Indians, would not fail to drive the Spaniards out of Florida, — he intended to erect a fortification at Mobile Bay, make peace with the Chickasaws, and arm them against the Indians. It was this latter alternative which he was forced to adopt.

After waiting the utmost limit of time for the return of the “*Enflammée*,” and the no less overdue answer from Spain, he received orders from Versailles for immediate sailing.

On this voyage Iberville was accompanied by his fifth brother and closest emulator in the family and his able coadjutor in the Hudson Bay expedition, Le Moyne de Serigny, lieutenant of marine in command of the “*Palmier*.” On the 15th of December they arrived before Pensacola, which the relaxing vigilance of the Spaniards permitted them to enter. De la Riola was absent in Vera Cruz ; but his sergeant-major came on board to pay his respects, and announced the death of Sauvole.

Iberville in his turn announced the succession of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Spain, — intelligence which was received with great joy.


A boat was despatched to Biloxi with orders for Bienville at once to transport himself to Mobile with men and materials necessary to make an establishment there. Serigny and Chateauguay took over from Pensacola provisions, materials, and eighty men from the equipage of the “*Renommée*” and “*Palmier*” in small boats. With them went over at the same time to Mobile the Sieur de la Salle, a relation of the great explorer, and one of the first discoverers, he claims, of the Mississippi. Appointed royal commissary of the colony, he turned out

eventually, as will be seen, a royal mischief-maker. Iberville himself was unable to go to Mobile, being confined to his bed, ever since leaving St. Domingo, with an abscess in his side for which he had to submit to an operation that caused him great suffering. His activity, however, seems little diminished thereby. Every day of his journal is well filled with previsionsal and provisional orders and instructions, — building magazines for the royal property on Massacre Island; locating the new establishment on Mobile River, “sixteen leagues from Massacre Island at the second bluff,” he writes to Bienville; sending constant reinforcements of workmen from his crew; directing the building of flat boats to lighten the freighted barges through Mobile Bay; sending Tonty with ambassadorial powers to the Chickasaws and Choctaws; and lending one of his boats to the Spaniards to send to Vera Cruz for relief. Pensacola was in its normal state of misery; Iberville writes that it could not be greater. The long-due ship of provisions from Vera Cruz was feared to be lost; the garrison was utterly destitute of food, clothing, and money. Of the one hundred and eighty men composing it, sixty were convicts, and they, Iberville says, were the better men; all were discontented, and desertions were of daily occurrence. When the French ships arrived, the governor and officers were worn out, having been on foot night and day from an indefinitely protracted apprehension of a mutiny.

CHAPTER X.

BIENVILLE's garrison at Biloxi was in no better condition physically than the Spanish garrison at Pensacola. One half of the men were actually ill or convalescent, and all were in dire distress for want of food, having had no other subsistence for three months than the small quantities of corn that could be bought from the Indians, and what game the hunters could kill. Bienville mustered a force of forty for the work at Mobile, where he, with his brothers Serigny and Chateauguay, displayed the same activity in executing Iberville's orders that the latter did in issuing them.

Tents were erected on Massacre Island, and magazines hastily constructed to receive the provisions and goods discharged from the transports, while work was begun upon the fort and magazines at Mobile. All the men and material were landed at the first place, and ferried over to their final port, the shallows in the channel not permitting the free entrance of the vessels themselves into the bay. In reading of the contrarieties of wind and tide that befell them, of the sand-banks and shifting channels, of the tedious and never-ceasing work of transportation, and of the unavoidable accidents and mishaps attending it, — one is not surprised at the recurring longing of the French and their increasing admiration for the commodious and easily accessible harbour of Pensacola.



Iberville's wound healing in the course of two months, he was able to sail over to Mobile in the "Palmier," carrying the last instalment of provisions. One Spanish pilot had told him of a channel between Massacre Island and the little island to the south of it, Pelican Island. As soon as the wind permitted, he found this channel, and easily carried the "Palmier" through it over the bar, and anchored in Mobile Harbour, which he praises as having a depth of thirty feet, and protection from north and south wind. The channel, he wrote, although difficult of entrance, would be easy to defend ; but he was not sure that a south wind might not shift the bar at the mouth, — which really occurred some ten years afterwards, practically closing it.

He found the transport, under command of M. de Marigny, engaged in trips between Biloxi and Mobile, stranded on the shore, where it had been driven from its anchors by a south wind. After working at it for some time, he left it to await relief from a high tide. At Massacre Island he sharply and promptly defined M. de la Salle's duties and position for him, the royal commissary having begun the exercise of his functions with more zeal than discretion ; Iberville explaining that he did not wish affairs to come to the same pass as during the administration of M. de Sauvole, when the commissary pretended to command everything and everybody, even to the commander himself. He put a *garde magasin* in charge of the stores, who was to deliver goods to M. de la Salle upon an order from the commander. Crossing the bay, he entered the mouth of the river, and ascended it to the site of the new establishment, where he found Bienville busily at

work clearing the forests, building the fort and a huge flat-bottomed boat, which was to do ferriage duty between Mobile and Massacre Island.

Iberville speaks with pleasure of the beautiful nature of the country, of the high banks, the magnificent forests of valuable trees, — white and red oak, laurel, sassafras, and nut trees, and particularly the pines, the finest mast-timber in the world. He ordered a mast cut for the "*Palmier*," which had lost hers in a thunder-storm off St. Domingo.

Bienville was sent to explore the Mobile River, beginning with the little islands that studded its mouth. He found upon them only abandoned habitations of Indians driven away by the same war against the Couchaques and Alabamas, which had scattered so many of its evidences over the beautiful country. The guide showed Bienville the island which held concealed the figures of the ancient gods, renowned among all the tribes round-about, — the gods to whom the Mobilians used to come yearly with sacrificial offerings. The myth was that they had descended from heaven, and to touch them was to suffer the penalty of instant death. It took no less a bribe than a gem to induce the Indian guide to reveal the site of the destroyed sanctuary. He did it by walking backwards, and would not approach nearer than ten paces.

Bienville searched until he found the figures on a hillock near the village, among the canes. There were five of them, — a bear, an owl, a man, a woman, and a child, made of plaster, the three latter fashioned in the similitude of the Indians of that country. Bienville brought them to Iberville, who thought them to be the

work of some of De Soto's Spaniards. He kept them by him and took them to France with him, — much to the surprise of the Indians, who could not account for his temerity or continuance in life.

Six leagues above the new establishment were the Mobile Indians; two leagues above them the Tohomos, or "little chief" Indians. Their villages were spread out over both banks and the islands of the river, in clusters of from four to twelve cabins or families. Most of their land overflowed during high water for a period of about ten days.

At the time of the settlement of the French, the two tribes numbered only about three hundred and fifty men; but the many deserted habitations all around spoke of an epoch when the river flowed through a thick population of them, — an epoch which the French could but regret, for they appear most estimable in the accounts of Iberville: a laborious, frugal people, cultivating their lands industriously, and keeping up their peaceful intercourse one with another by means of cleared roads through the forests from village to village. They it was who furnished the granaries of the French for years, and indeed proved their mainstay during the famines which the uncertain communications with France inflicted periodically upon the colonists.


The famines of the French were, however, periodic and temporary, and, as they say, they could always manage; the hunger of the Spaniards was chronic, and they seem to have had no resource but borrowing from the French, who were thus, from the time of their settlement in the country, kept in the embarrassing position of having to grant politically and courteously what they

detested granting at all, and so of maintaining for years a rival whom they despised, in a locality they coveted, — a locality of which, without the charity of the French, famine would have time and time again forced the abandonment. Iberville's journal records that although fifty barrels of flour had already been given to him, the governor of Pensacola now wrote asking for more provisions, — in fact, Iberville says the Spaniards lived upon him for two months. The journal omits none of the details that fill up the thoughts and days of the busy governor, — sending the boats to buy corn of the Tohomés and Mobilians; the rain; the return of the boats; the laying out of the prospective city. Four days were consumed in aligning the streets and in making allotments. M. de la Salle, the notary, and the four families brought from France, were provided for, and the latter put to clearing land. The tanner whom Iberville had also brought from France, wandered imprudently in the woods, and lost his way. The usual search was made, with no results. Fifteen days later, a hunter discovered the unfortunate wretch sitting at the foot of a tree on a beautiful bank near a trench he had dug, at the head of which he had erected a cross bearing the history of his tragic adventure. He no longer resembled a man, the journal says, having for twelve days had no food but water.

One day, some forerunners from Tonty announced his speedy arrival with four Choctaw chiefs and three notable Chickasaw warriors; and all other interests subsided in that of preparing an effective reception for them. The party arrived at night. By eight o'clock the next morning the presents for the two great rival

savage powers were selected and exposed ; two hundred pounds of powder, two hundred and eight pounds of balls, two hundred pounds of bird-shot, twelve guns, one hundred hatchets, one hundred and fifty knives, with caldrons, beads, flints, awls, and other important articles to the Indians, that swelled the total to a considerable and tempting bait. With it before their eyes, the Indians seem to have experienced little difficulty in coming to terms with the donors. Iberville assembled them in a solemn conclave, and with Bienville as interpreter, made them a speech exposing with frankness the policy he intended adopting towards them, but grinding his lens to suit their simple eyes. He painted the insidious designs of the English, arming tribe against tribe, until the extermination of its natural defenders left the country at their mercy. He counted up before them the number of Indians who had been killed, and the still more unfortunate ones, the prisoners, sold into slavery by the English. He told them, he says, several other things also calculated to destroy their estimation of the English, and insure their driving them out.


Per contra, he made the eulogium of the French, and painted the glittering benefits to be derived by the Indians from their friendship, — trade and merchandise, justice and protection without stint, and above all, no more bloody inter-tribal wars. Should obtuseness or craft of Indians or English defeat the arguments thus eloquently coloured, should the Chickasaws eventually not become friends of the French and enemies of the English, Iberville threatened the representatives of that tribe in his presence with the arming of the Choctaws, To-homes, and Mobilians, as he had already armed the



Natchez against them; and also, instead of arresting, to excite the Illinois in their war against them. The Chickasaws, far from proving obtuse to bribe, argument, and menace, were, on the contrary, most amenable. They promised all that was required against the English, buried the hatchet with the Choctaws, and with the French formed all the alliance necessary to acquire the cement of so goodly an array of presents.

Iberville, elated, computed that this treaty was good to the Crown of France for at least two thousand Chickasaws, of whom seven or eight hundred were armed, and for about four thousand Choctaws. He set himself at once to ratify his share of the articles of it. Five Canadians were sent, with the returning Choctaw chiefs, up the Mobile River to the spot where Iberville had promised to locate a trading-station; and three Canadians were sent, with two of the Chickasaws, to the Illinois, to demand of them the return of their Chickasaw prisoners and to acquaint them that Iberville had buried the hatchet which the governor of Canada had told them to raise against the Chaouanons, allies of the Chickasaws. Letters were also sent by these last messengers to the Vicar-general of Quebec, Bishop St. Vallier, then at the Tamaroas, praying that missionaries might be sent immediately among the Chickasaws and Choctaws, to assure and maintain, not their spiritual condition, but their good disposition to the French.

There was but six months' supply of provisions on hand in the stores of the garrison. As there was little prospect of relief from France, and as the governor of Pensacola confessed there was none of his being able to return the French loans to him, Iberville gave Bienville




an order to send to St. Domingo for what was necessary. On the last day of March, 1702, he left the anchorage of Massacre Island and sailed to the harbour of Pensacola, where the "Renommée" lay waiting for him. His colony and his brother never saw him again.

CHAPTER XI.

1702-1704.

FORT ST. LOUIS DE LA MOBILE, the headquarters of Bienville, became the capital of the new French dominion, and the young man of twenty-two the chief executive, virtually the first governor, of Louisiana, — a name that then covered three States and a half. Even in the reduced extent to which the royal names are now limited, the office of governor has never been eminently distinguished for ease of administration or laurel-leaved emoluments. But while every holder of it since Bienville (with the usual necessary notable exceptions in the near past) has commended himself to the hearty sympathy, if not to the admiration, of the impartial observer, not one of them is more deserving the meed of compassion than this tyro official, wrestling with the English and Indians, and cajoling the Spaniards, for the territory he occupied, fighting the suspicion, distrust, and calumny of those beneath him for the authority he exercised. Warding off famine and disease with one hand, controlling and guiding his leash of turbulent Canadians with the other, dismissed twice from office, with, for thanks, the acquittal of a Scotch verdict, he nevertheless seems to have conducted his administration through the torpid encouragement of his superior, and active insults of his inferiors, with the same stolidity of determination with which he con-



ducted his pioneers through the freezing swamps of the Red River country. And it may be added that he left so little mark upon the written history of the State he made, that suspicion points to some obliteration or destruction of record by those who, to secure the future working of their malevolence, usurped the natural privilege of time.

According to the understanding of Iberville, based upon information obtained from the Indians themselves and from bands of reconnoitring Canadians, the location of the different tribes surrounding Mobile was roughly as follows: Nearest, on the Mobile River, as has been stated, the Tohomos and Mobilians, about three hundred and fifty families. To the northwest of these, between the Tombigbee and the Mississippi, lay the villages of the Choctaws, about four thousand families. North of the Choctaws were the Chickasaws, less powerful than the former in point of numbers, but fiercer, more unmanageable, and infinitely more to be dreaded, as they proved to the French. Northeast from Mobile, on the Alabama River, lived the Alabamas, four hundred families strong. On the Apalachicola River were the lands of the Couchagues, whom the Spaniards called Apalachicolas, — a tribe once subdued by them, but which, under the harassing depredations of English Indians, were being divided and scattered, some families seeking refuge with the French, others going over to their foes and establishing themselves in Carolina.

Bienville immediately applied himself to manipulating these warring, discordant savage elements into some efficient organization for the French, directing presents and caresses, menaces and punishment, with his unflinching accuracy of judgment in Indian affairs. Patiently

and deftly he worked ; but he had foes fully as deft, if less patient, than he, who could underwork ; and he never saw his Indian levee of protection nearing completion, but some crayfish-hole in an unexpected quarter would again let in the floods of war, and his edifice be threatened with demolition ; the English proving themselves not all Captain Barrs in Louisiana affairs.

Ravaging inroads were equipped from Carolina into the French and Spanish Indians' villages and cornfields, and harvest after harvest was destroyed with well-timed ruthlessness. The news of the War of the Spanish Succession developed the secret into open machinations, and the Southern Colonial English received a contribution from their Government of a fleet, which, hovering like a threatening cloud over the sea-board of Florida and Louisiana, kept the Spanish and French stations in a tense state of apprehension.

The Spaniards, as ill-provided with munitions of war as with food, knew no better defence than to shut themselves in their strongholds and send out urgent appeals to Havana, Vera Cruz, Bienville, — the latter generally the transmitter of the appeals to the two places. Hardly a month passed that Fort St. Louis saw not some bark speeding through the waters of the river bearing some Spanish officer, from St. Augustine, Apalachicola, or Pensacola, with his message of dire emergency ; and the young commander was forced to respond with men, provisions, arms, or boats, as the case was a tax for which his garrison and stores were poorly provided. Like Iberville, he wrote to the minister that, truthfully, had it not been for him, the Spaniards would have been more than once forced to abandon their possessions.

And along the Mississippi, wherever an English trader could insinuate himself, tribes broke into revolt, and the torch of war, so carefully extinguished by the French, would be re-lighted, and bloody destruction spread from village to village ; the missionaries and their attendants furnishing always the first victims. And almost as often as the Spanish barks, there would come, hurrying over the rough waters of the Gulf, long-pointed cypress pirogues from the river country, bearing appeals for food and protection, with news of terrifying fears or more terrifying realities from the roused savages, not infrequently fetching a load of wounded, discouraged pastors fleeing from missions where their sheep had turned into ravening wolves. So came Father Davion, fleeing from the Tunicas, bearing the story of the assassination of the aged priest Foucault and his attendants by their Coroas guides as they were peacefully descending the river to visit Mobile.

Bienville intrusted the punishment of the Coroas to the Arkansas, who gladly undertook it, while he prepared to inflict upon the Alabamas what they merited for an act of treachery which had incensed the whole colony. Notwithstanding the peace solemnly sworn and ratified between them, they were induced by the English (so the French say) not only to raise the hatchet against the new colony, but to do so with a predetermined *ruse*.

Some of their chiefs came to the fort with such plausible stories of the plenteousness of corn with them and their neighbours that Bienville, as anticipated in his constant scarcity of food, gladly accepted the opportunity of purchasing of them. When they returned, he sent

five men, four Frenchmen and one Canadian, with them for this purpose. After a lapse of some weeks the Canadian alone came back to relate the success of the savage stratagem. The party, it seems, beguiling their journey with pleasant visits to near-lying Indian villages, had, in perfect cordiality and good-will, travelled to within two days of the Alabama village. Here the chiefs begged the white men to remain while they went in advance to notify their people, so that a suitable reception could be prepared. That night, while the white men slept, the Indians returned, and succeeded in tomahawking four of them. The Canadian escaped by leaping into the river and swimming for his life under a shower of bullets fired after him. A hatchet, sent with surer aim, inflicted an ugly wound on the arm; this he dressed with pine gum gathered from the trees, chewed and applied as he fled through the forest.


Bienville prepared for a brilliant and effective campaign; as it was his first essay in arms against the savages, a success seemed imperative to insure the stability of his future relations with them. The result curiously resembles that of his last essay, thirty years afterwards.

Raising a levy among his Indian allies, he mustered a force of nearly two hundred men, sixty of whom were Canadians. St. Denis and Tonty shared the command of the expedition. There was a grand camp-fire held in Mobile, the rallying-point, with great feasting and rejoicing everywhere. Bienville says that one would have thought all, Indians and French, of the same nation. After the feast, several days were given up to medicine, according to the Indian custom. Then Bienville distributed guns and sabres to the principal warriors, and

the start was made in pirogues. The plan was to ascend the Mobile River to the Alabama, to land at some convenient point, and marching rapidly across the country, fall, as a surprise, upon the foe. The apparent zeal and protestations of loyalty of the Mobilians, and their position of nearest neighbours, advanced them to the confidential post of counsellors and guides; their young men also were to carry the baggage of the French. But under their affected bustle and hurry, it was soon perceived that the Mobilians were delaying affairs as much as possible, and they succeeded in retarding the baggage three days after the pirogues arrived at the landing-place. Immediately the ammunition was distributed, the savages were warned not to approach too near the fire with the powder. Unfortunately two of them forgot, or were heedless: their powder exploded upon them, burning them so severely that they died two days afterwards in great agony. This was an omen which the savage mind could not but respect, particularly in a war conducted by strangers against their own race. A great many immediately turned back from the expedition. The march proceeded, and was conducted at the discretion of the Mobile guides, who, faithful to their policy, conducted the little army so cunningly that at the end of eighteen days it was spent with marching, and very little, if any, nearer the enemy than when it set out. They would not start until two hours after sunrise, forcing the French to march during the heat of the day. "But," as Bien-ville writes, "that would have been nothing if the Choc-taws and Mobilians had not deserted in a body, and if sickness had not broken out among the Frenchmen, unused to such exposure, heat, and exertion." The

almoner, the surgeon, and twelve men succumbed. Then the chief of the Tohomes fell ill, and he and all his men turned back. The few Indians who remained did not conceal their intention of soon following so pleasing an example. In such a state of affairs the three commanders decided that as they could not advance without their allies, there was no choice left them but to turn back also, particularly as their suspicions of the Mobilians led them to believe that they would find the Alabamas on guard, or warned out of their village. They determined, however, that their vengeance, more than ever needed, should only be deferred, but that the next time it should not be at the mercy of any Indian allies. Marching in a straight line, they reached the fort in four days.

After a few days' repose the new expedition, manned with Canadians and French, made a hopeful start. The Mobilians, who no doubt had warned the Alabamas of the previous advance, were counted upon to have also advised them of the ensuing retreat ; so the expectation of a surprise this time was a guarantee. Bienville, Tonty, and St. Denis again commanded. They were more successful in reaching the Indians, but hardly more so in executing vengeance upon them. They made the entire journey by water. As they neared the spot where their companions had been assassinated, they discovered nine pirogues, belonging to a party of Alabamas on a hunt. They were secured, carried down stream, and concealed. Scouts were sent to spy out the camp. It was found a short distance above, on a bluff upon the bank of the river. Bienville was for attacking it at once ; but his companions prevailed in favour of a surprise at



night. They waited in their hiding-places through the rest of the day until darkness fell and until, through the darkness, the camp-fires dimmed to a dull, smouldering glow, when the savages, as they judged, would be in the fastness of their heavy sleep. Then the command was given, and the stealthy advance began. There was the thick forest, a canebrake, and the bluff between them and the camp-fires. With all their precautions, a dry twig crackled under some foot. A wakeful Indian called out a challenge in his own language ; but in the dead silence that followed, he laid his head down again to sleep. The advance was resumed. Foot-falls now fell upon the half-sleeping ear ; the war-cry rose in the air ; a gun went off in the darkness, killing one of the Frenchmen. The old men, women, and children broke from the camp and ran into the forest. The warriors retreated slowly after them, firing their guns at the invaders. All escaped, with the exception of four, — two killed, and two wounded. The French also had two men killed ; and for the rest of their vengeance were fain to content themselves with destroying the Alabamas' camp, breaking up their pirogues, and throwing their hunting booty into the river.

Bienville thought that the demonstration, such as it was, had a wholesome effect upon the savages both friendly and inimical. But he did not entirely trust to this effect, nor cease his efforts here. On his return to Mobile he put the scalps of the Alabamas in the market, offering a gun and five pounds of powder and ball apiece for them, — a road to self-armament of which the Choc-taws and Chickasaws were not slow in availing themselves. The war sputtered along like a slow fire for

nine years. It was an easy channel for French and English animosities, and one kept open with only the small expense of guns and ammunition to both of them.

The Mobilians were detached a few years afterwards from the Alabamas by Bienville's generosity in restoring to them some captive Alabama women and children, taken by De Boisbriant on one of the independent expeditions for which he was noted in the colony. The Mobilians claimed the captives as kinspeople, and their gratitude to Bienville for their restoration maintained them in unswerving loyalty to the French ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XII.

1704, 1705.

IN the mean time the fort and its dependencies were completed. It is described by one of its builders, the literary ship-carpenter, Pennicaut, as being sixty fathoms square, with a battery of six guns at each corner. Inside were a chapel, the guard-house, and officers' lodgings ; in the centre, a square parade-ground. The barracks of the soldiers and Canadians were outside, some fifty paces to the left, on the bank of the river. Later, on an eminence also to the left of the fort, was erected the residence for priests.

In the month of August, 1703, the ship "La Loire" arrived from France with seventeen passengers, sixty thousand livres of money, and provisions and goods for the colonists, — a much-needed succour. Iberville, named commander-in-chief of the new French possession, was detained in Paris to accompany the next ship, "Le Pélican," to sail for Louisiana, so it was promised, the following September. She did not arrive until midsummer of 1704, and she came without the commander-in-chief, who was this time detained in France by ill health ; but the force of his influence at court was evidenced in the cargo. Everything that a Government paternally solicitous could provide for an infant colony came on the "Pelican," — live-stock, food, merchandise (this to be

sold, however, for the profit of the king), a parish priest, a curate, four missionaries, a sick nurse, four families of artisans, seventy-five soldiers of the new Company being raised in France for Louisiana by Volezard and Chateaugué, and, most welcome of all, under charge of two Gray Sisters, twenty-three young girls "reared in piety, and drawn from sources above suspicion, who knew how to work," for whose safe and honourable transport the minister warned the captain he would be held responsible. These were the wives with whom Iberville proposed to anchor the roving, lawless *coureurs de bois* to the colony, and domesticate them into respectable citizens. All well featured and pleasing, they were married, with one obstinate exception, within a month. The artisans received their allotment of lands along the river front, the cattle were set at large, the goods and provisions stored in the magazines, and the sun of prosperity seemed about to rise over Fort St. Louis de la Mobile. But in reality the "Pelican" proved a poor mother-bird to her nestlings, her hold a Pandora's box to Bienville. In the first place, touching at Havana on her way, or returning to it, after the discharge of her cargo, for the bees and oxen, the ship brought in the yellow fever. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that it raged ruthlessly. In the month of September, — the month of pestilential climax in this climate, — Bienville wrote to the Minister of Marine that two thirds of the colonists lay ill or dead, and he, like his brother, invariably stated the best view of any subject. The "Pelican" lost half her crew, and to get back to France had to be re-equipped with twenty soldiers from the garrison. Thirty of the new Volezard Company died; Dougé, the Jesuit priest,

Levasseur, and, most serious loss of all to Bienville and to the colony, the efficient, the loyal, the admirable Henri de Tonty died. The "Pelican" sailed away, carrying to the Minister of Marine Bienville's account of the scourge, his mortuary report, and his demand for more emigrants, live-stock, and particularly oxen for ploughing. The captain despatched a brigantine to him from Havana with the warning that the English were arriving at Carolina to drive him out of Mobile and the Mississippi. "If they come, they will not drive us away so easily," he wrote. His main reliance, like Iberville's, was upon the Canadians. Bands of wandering *coureurs de bois* made their way from time to time to the fort with their peltry to trade, or with nothing but their curiosity to gratify. These the young Canadian governor generally succeeded in enrolling into his service either as soldiers or emissaries to the Indians. The sight of this growing force in Louisiana of their own outlaws did not act to allay the resentment of the Canadian Government against what it would persist in considering a rival establishment. It cried out about the trade in peltry, and even thus timely was not reticent in its insinuations against the band of Canadian brothers and kinsmen who did or might make profit out of it. And in the barely crawling colony itself, a general, or, it may be, a particular, feeling began to evince itself among the Frenchmen against what De la Salle, the notary, at least considered a partisan organization for the furthering of the interests of the Canadians, — a feeling that De la Salle took it upon himself to express later. There were other feelings also to be voiced afterwards, — feelings which the "Journal historique" and Pennicaut and Bien-

ville himself for some time discreetly make no allusion to. They give the pioneer and soldier history of the little place, narrating with pride every step forward in their progress with the Indians, and of every successful trial of their wit against the wit of the English and Spaniards. These other feelings belonged to the historically celebrated Curate de la Vente, and they bring us to the second category of the ill gifts of the "Pelican" to the colony. Perhaps they had better be classed in the first, for in the moral and financial damage done to the feeble establishment, the infliction of this contentious priest upon it was a sorer curse than the yellow fever, — there is no doubt whatever that the Canadians at least so considered it. During the ripening of the dissensions sowed by the clericals right and left, the chronicle of the fort proceeds with the account, which is the same in all new settlements in America, of the efforts to establish some stable political relations with such unstable qualities as Indian politicians.

The 1st of February, 1705, tidings came to Mobile that the Chickasaws had seized and sold as slaves to the English several Choctaw families who had come to visit them in good faith, and that the act of treachery had caused a rupture between the two nations. As there were in Fort St. Louis at the time more than seventy Chickasaws of both sexes, they were very much troubled about returning to their villages, which they could not do without passing through the territory of the irate Choctaws. At their solicitation, Bienville sent twenty-five Canadians under De Boisbriant to escort them. They arrived on their route at the Choctaw village about the end of the month. The Choctaw chief assured De Boisbriant that

they would not oppose the return of the Chickasaws, but that it was only just to reproach them with their perfidy in the presence of the French. Therefore, the Chickasaws were invited to assemble in the open space in the centre of the village, and the Choctaw chief, with his calumet in his hand, began his penitentiary harangue to them. He reproached them with their injustices and want of good faith; told them if the French took any interest in them, it was because of ignorance of their real character. The Chickasaws listened presumably with more uneasiness than contrition. Around, a circle of Choctaws had gradually closed them in. When the orator had logically reached his point that they were too vile to live, and therefore it was proper they should die, reversing the plumed pipe in his hand, there was no appeal and no hope of escape from the sentence, which was executed at the instant. Only the women and children were spared. Several Choctaws were killed in the *mêlée*, and De Boisbriant accidentally received a ball in trying to get out of the way. He was placed upon a litter and carried to the fort by a numerous escort of Choctaws.

It was a blow which staggered the Chickasaws. They sent deputation after deputation to Bienville, praying his good offices in favour of peace. After a year's hostilities and losses had somewhat mitigated the resentment of the Choctaws, and chastened them, Bienville was able to bring them to terms and persuade them to smoke the pipe of peace with their adversaries. The reconciliation proved a mere truce, however, and Bienville's hope of uniting the two powerful tribes for the French an illusion. A month later, the Choctaws were again at Fort

St. Louis, smarting from another outrage of the Chickasaws, who had again broken into one of their villages, and again carried off more of their people. They demanded powder and ball of Bienville, which he granted, and another war was added to the list, and counted to the advantage of the English in Carolina.

A year passed, and nothing was heard from France. Stores were eked out with purchases of corn from the Indians, and other necessities from Havana and Vera Cruz. Chateauguay was the sea-courier of the colony, and during the long interval between the last and the next vessels from France, he ran his two *traversiers* with the regularity of a packet-line between Mobile, Pensacola, Havana, and Vera Cruz, doing the postal and carrying business, not for one, but for two colonies, — a business, however, which, as will be seen later, had another interpretation put upon it. His arrivals and departures are *par excellence* the important items in the details of the "Journal Historique," which gives us also an adventure of Chateauguay.

Returning from Pensacola, whither he had been summoned by the vice-admiral of the Spanish "Armادillo," whose frigate of forty-six guns had been wrecked in port by a sudden squall, Chateauguay saw struggling off Mobile Point a brigantine, battered and broken and on the point of sinking. Answering the crew's cries and signals for help, he sailed to it. It proved to be a filibuster brigantine from Martinique, which had been caught in a storm while doubling Cape St. Anthony. Its mast was gone, its deck had been driven in, it had lost its fore-castle, and eight men had been swept overboard. Chateauguay lent the captain an anchor, landed his crew, —

ninety Frenchmen and Spaniards, — and carried him and his treasure, — seventy-two thousand piastres, — to Fort St. Louis. The brigantine sank the next day at her anchors. How much of the saved treasure came to the rescuer is not stated, although Pennicaut describes the filibuster captain's gratitude as boundless. Two years to a month after the departure of the "Pelican," Chateaugay arrived in the harbour of Massacre Island from Havana, followed by the "Aigle," a frigate of thirty-six guns, under command of De Noyou, brother-in-law of Bienville, conveying a brigantine of supplies to the colony.

The "Aigle" sailed away in August, carrying Bienville's long official report to his Government, contained in two letters, one written before the arrival of the frigate, and one during her stay in port. They furnish such a clear, succinct, and reasonable epitome of the history of his establishment (the official documents of both Iberville and Bienville are always admirably clear) that it seems almost needless to attempt to add to them.

After detailing the Chickasaw and Choctaw complications, Bienville reports the destruction of Pensacola by fire, the loss of the vice-admiral's ship, and his assistance to the Spaniards in both emergencies, his being forced to borrow food from them on several occasions, and his discussions with them over the limits of their respective territories, the Spaniards claiming one bank of the Mobile, and Bienville maintaining his rights to both. Father Gravier had arrived, his arm pierced with five arrowheads, shot by the Indians of his mission. Fifty Canadians also had arrived from the upper Mississippi, with the intention of settling. Among them were two men, who

had travelled from village to village on the Missouri to very near the mines of the Spaniards. They assured Bienville it was the finest country in the world ; showing three specimens of minerals from there to support their asseverations, which they also backed by the assurance that the savages of the region were at war with the Spaniards. The Choctaws had made a fine stand with their new arms against the Indian allies of the English. He was constructing a mill, and forcing the colonists to sow small tracts of land ; but there was a good deal of general sickness among them. All the *coureurs de bois* except the married ones had returned to the woods, going in preference up among the Illinois, where there were Jesuit missionaries. There were not enough missionaries in the country ; but only the strong and robust should be sent, the savages despising the pale and feeble-looking. Also, only grown men should be sent to colonize. He proposed sending some Indian chiefs to France, that they might see what the country was, they, so far, having but a poor opinion of the French.

The colonists asked for negroes to cultivate their lands ; they would pay cash for them. "There were some tribes who sold their prisoners for slaves ; but as they deserted too easily, the colonists did not want them, but asked permission to carry these slaves to the islands to exchange them for negroes. This is what the English did." ¹

¹ The inaccuracy of the following is patent : —

"Bienville proposed to send Indians to the islands, there to be exchanged for negroes. If his plan had met with approval, perhaps he might have made the colony self-supporting, and thus have avoided, in 1710, the scandal of subsisting his men by scattering them among *the very*

These were the important, but they appeared to be not the heaviest, cares of the callow governor; they were what he felt his ability could cope with. There is a tone of hopelessness and powerlessness in the following, which shows that there are limits to Canadian hardihood and endurance: "One of the girls sent out had refused to marry, although several good *partis* had been offered to her. The men colonists were beginning to accustom themselves to eating corn; but the women, many of whom were Parisians, eat it with difficulty," — which makes them rail against Monsieur the Bishop of Quebec, who had given them to understand that they were coming to the Promised Land. The priest De la Vente had refused to baptize a child of whom Bienville was god-father, on the pretext that he, Bienville, was talking to a woman;¹ and the priest refused to make reparation afterwards. De la Vente would receive orders from no one but the Bishop of Quebec, who had appointed him. "One would expect," Bienville comments, "the disorders he causes, as he had to be recalled from the Indies, where he was stationed, the inhabitants refusing absolutely to have him." The priest crossed him in everything, demanded to have his church roofed, threatening to have it done at the expense of him to

savages whom he wished to sell into slavery." — JUSTIN WINSOR: "Canada and Louisiana." *Narrative and Critical History of America*, v. 27.

As will be seen, the French scattered themselves among friendly Indians in 1710, and there was an idea (a most foolish one) of selling these into slavery. The above is Bienville's proposition, *verbatim*, after Margry.

¹ For fear the copyist might have made a mistake in the word, the compiler, Margry, returned to his summary — it was, *talking*.

whom he thought the work belonged (apparently Bienville), although he had several legacies in his hands for the purpose. Bienville had invited the priest to leave the chapel in the fort and take possession of his church outside ; and the latter had threatened him with excommunication, and was even near doing so, Bienville wishing to attend the mass which his almoner, the Jesuit, celebrated in the fort. Despite the commands of the king to the contrary, the priest authorized marriages between Frenchmen and Indian women, which gave the former warrant to scatter themselves among the Indians and lead libertine lives in the woods, under the excuse that they were married there. The ill treatment which De la Vente had inflicted upon the Jesuit Gravier had forced Bienville to send him, Gravier, away (evidently by the "Aigle"). From Gravier could be learned what sort of man the priest De la Vente was.

The commissary, De la Salle, sinned in the other extreme. "He has no servant. He waits upon himself, and works the ground with his own hands, — which does not comport with the dignity of his office." Bienville had spoken to him about it, to which he had replied that his Majesty did not pay enough for him to have a valet. The writer did not fail, as no officer of the time ever failed to do at every opportunity, to remind the minister of his nine years' service in Louisiana, asking for an augmentation of salary, and complaining that his health was beginning to suffer.

CHAPTER XIII.

1706, 1707.

LOUISIANA, with its elemental discords, was but a miniature reflection of the greater province of Canada ; in fact, the tropical ground was only sprouting seed of Canada's sowing. The governor, the priests, the royal commissary, and those active skirmishers in family quarrels, the women, were engaged in no new drama, they were simply re-enacting the well-known and well-worn *rôles* which neither time, place, nor circumstance seems able to disassociate from sex, clerical and official position. With their plotting and counterplotting, crimination and recrimination, Satan himself could not have worsened the moral atmosphere of the struggling community, nor more surely have blighted its first promise.

In Louisiana a slight change of the Canadian original is offered in the personality of the young, rude, unlettered Canadian, who from midshipman and lieutenant of marines, had been pushed to the first place of a command, whose entire character and administration constituted one obstinate determination to maintain and increase the grasp of country left him by Iberville. Bulwarking himself against the Spaniards in the east, spying out their land in the west, fending off the English at the north, keeping his channel of the Mississippi well open, scouring the Gulf with his little vessels, arming the Indians against

one another and against everybody but himself, buying, borrowing food, quartering his men in times of dearth upon the Indians, recalling them at every new invoice from France, Havana, or Vera Cruz, marrying the girls, breaking the Canadians into farmers, punishing savages, repressing his own bandits, building, sowing, carrying out with a handful of soldiers and a pittance of money the great Mississippi and Gulf policy of Iberville, — his activity and dexterity, it would seem, must have compelled acknowledgment from even his detractors. It must be confessed, however, that he was most lamentably overmatched in his domestic adversaries, and combat them as violently as he could, and did unfortunately too often with their own weapons, De la Salle and De la Vente to this day tell their story against him, and to this day the biographer of Bienville must still be his apologist.¹

De la Salle explains himself in his letters; a word of preamble is necessary to explain De la Vente.

The missionary zeal of the Roman Catholic priesthood in North America developed (if indeed it was not developed by) a spirit of competition among the different orders engaged in proselyting the savages, which sometimes savoured more of trade and politics than religion. Partisanship naturally ensued, which infected not only the civil and military authorities, but the ecclesiastical tribunals. The missionaries themselves were not only attacked in their name and reputation, but in the good work for which they were actually exposing themselves

¹ Margry confesses that the character of Bienville, all said, was not sympathetic to him (Introduction to vol. v.), and he makes no effort to render it sympathetic to others.

to the most cruel of deaths, and their good work ravished of its moral effect by the overt and covert accusations of the friends and members of rival societies. The injury to the interests of France thereby was as irreparable as the injury to the interests of religion.

The Jesuits, always in the van of missionary work, could with fair show of reason claim, through Marquette and Joliet, the spiritual territory of the Mississippi valley. Allouez, at Kaskaskia, had continued the mission among the Illinois dropped by the dying hand of Marquette. To Allouez had succeeded Gravier, appointed vicar-general by the Bishop of Quebec. In addition to other extensions of the work of his Order, Gravier planned and carried out a mission among the Tamaroas branch of the Illinois Indians.


But the Récollets also had a claim upon the Mississippi valley. La Salle's monomaniacal feelings against the Jesuits will be remembered. A Récollet therefore accompanied him upon his voyage down the Mississippi in 1681, Zenobe Membre; and he it was who had the honour of intoning the *Vexilla Regis* and *Te Deum* at La Salle's magnificent "prise de possession" of very little less than the whole of the South of the North American continent.

The Bishop of Quebec, Saint-Vallier, by a prompt assertion of his rights, prevented the dismemberment of his diocese, which the Holy See attempted by the appointment of several Vicariates Apostolic in the Mississippi valley. Saint-Vallier also claimed the Mississippi valley through Marquette and Joliet, — the one a priest of his diocese, the other a pupil of his Seminary. The revocation of the Vicariates Apostolic followed.

The Seminary of Quebec, a foundling of the "Foreign Missions" of Paris, then obtained from Saint-Vallier, in 1698, official authorization to mission work in the fields of the West and along the Mississippi and its tributaries, projecting their first mission among the Tamaroas. The Jesuits protested that this tribe was already their own. Nevertheless, the Seminary priests, Montigny, Davion, and Saint-Casme, arrived, and took up their stations respectively among the Natchez, Tunicas, and Tamaroas.

Iberville, the son of a former employee of the Jesuits, was as frank in his sentiments for them as De la Salle had been against them. He established a Jesuit priest, Du Rhu, at the Fort of the Mississippi, and seldom lost an opportunity of exalting Jesuit intelligence to the detriment of that possessed by Récollets.

Holding the mouth of the Mississippi and established at its head, the Jesuits solicited from Saint-Vallier the exclusive spiritual direction of Louisiana. The bishop refused to grant this to any one religious order, withdrawing from Gravier the power of vicar-general. An appeal from the Jesuits, complaining of the intrusion into their territory, and a memoir from the bishop, were forwarded to the king. He referred the matter to an ecclesiastical commission, who decided in favour of the Seminary. In 1703, therefore, Saint-Vallier erected Mobile formally into a parish, annexing it to the Seminary of Foreign Missions at Paris and Quebec, which agreed to supply the clergy. Their first appointment as priest to the new parish was the Rev. Henri Roulleaux de la Vente, of the diocese of Bayeux, who, according to Bienville, was not altogether ignorant of




colonial experiences ; his curate was Alexandre Hervé. The maintenance of the clergy was expected from the king, and it was fixed at one thousand livres a year for the priest, and six hundred for the curate ; but the Minister of Marine, instead of paying or even confirming these terms, expressed astonishment that they should have been promised, " the king," he said, " not having decided the matter yet."

On his arrival in Mobile, De la Vente found the parish church in process of construction, and the parochial functions in the hands of Davion, who was most amicably in the same house with Dougé, the Jesuit, — a new house, still without doors and windows, for the completion of which the Jesuit had loaned the money. The epidemic, co-instant with the arrival of the "Pelican," must have held even ecclesiastical bickerings in abeyance. Dougé, as has been said, was one of the victims. It must have been during the first respite after the desperate struggle with the epidemic that De la Vente was formally inducted into his parish and placed in corporal possession of his church, after the observance of the required ceremonial, — the entry into the church, the sprinkling of holy water, the kissing of the high altar, the touching of the missal, the visit to the blessed sacrament of the altar, and the ringing of bells, according to the careful enumeration of the entry signed by Jean Baptiste de Bienville, commander, Pierre du Guay (Dugué) de Boisbriant, and Nicolas de la Salle, scribe, acting Commissary of Marine, contained in the old parochial registry of Mobile.

Like Iberville, Bienville threw his affections to the side of his father's old patrons. When, two years after

De la Vente's arrival, Gravier made his appearance at the fort, bearing in his body, not only the wounds, but in his arm an inextricable flint arrow-head, shot there months before by one of his relapsed flock (instigated by native priests, who also resented an intrusion into their territory), — the wise might well have had forebodings. The commander's warm reception and gracious treatment of the Jesuit could not fail to arouse (by that time it may only have needed quickening) the jealous violence of the parish priest. A year later it was in full blast, as Bienville's letter shows. Bienville accused the priest of inspiring De la Salle's attack against him. If this be true, De la Vente must have been gratified with himself as an inspiring source; for De la Salle's epistolary assaults, insinuations, and accusations are a credit to that species of literature by which scribes and commissaries in French colonial governments have ever undermined the reputation of their chiefs.

In August, 1706, he expedited his first shaft in a letter to M. Begon, the intendant at Rochefort, "begging him to arrest on arrival a certain Lallemand, merchant and commissary of M. d'Iberville, who had embarked on the 'Aigle' with more than fifteen thousand livres in piastres. He had also taken what he wished out of his Majesty's stores and powder magazine, without rendering an account to the commissary. He, De la Salle, had also heard that Bienville had sent a pirogue in pursuit of the pirogue bearing De la Vente's letters to the 'Aigle,' in order to withhold the said letters, and that the priest had otherwise cause to complain of Bienville's ill-treatment of him." A month later the commissary indited a thirty-page memoir, sent in duplicate, one copy



by a Spanish vessel, for, he explains, Iberville and his brothers form a league down there, which governs everything, even liberty of access to the minister. The mails were so untrustworthy between Louisiana and France that he had been obliged to write several letters and confide them to different persons on the "Aigle," in order to inform the minister of the truth of affairs in the country ; not that it was possible, even then, to give the particulars, as M. d'Iberville had sure ways of being informed of all that M. de la Salle's conscience would oblige him to write to the minister, and he would communicate, by way of Havana or Vera Cruz, with his league of brothers, upon whom his, De la Salle's, living depends, and they would proceed to inflict upon him all the suffering their revenge could suggest.

The bane of the commissary's conscience, and in his opinion the bane of the colony, was Bienville, against whom his bill of indictment was loaded to the full. "Nothing was to be seen in Louisiana but poverty, dearth, dissipation, extravagance, dishonesty, and tyranny," all of which seems to have been furnished gratis by the commander.

"The fort already rotting, the site of it the worst that could have been chosen ; it should be abandoned for Massacre Island. The colonists on the bay had succeeded better in four months than those on the river in nine years. The scarcity of provisions was attributed to the bands of Canadians whom Bienville supported and retained, notwithstanding the orders of the minister for their disbandment. Bienville had brought back two prisoners from his Alabama effort, and had burned them to death before the gate of the fort. He had also ill-treated the wife of De la Salle while the latter was away in Pensacola, whither he

had been sent by Bienville on business. Half of the goods and provisions were stolen in the transportation from Mas-sacre Island to the fort, do what the commissary could to prevent it, and work as he might from morning till night trying to regulate affairs as they were regulated in France. Bienville was tenacious only in contradicting the orders of the commissary. Bienville took all the game and other commodities brought by the Indians, for himself, although they were brought out of gratitude to the king. He sold a deer at eighty per cent profit. The *traversiers* had been engaged in carrying merchandise and peltry to Vera Cruz in the interests of Iberville and his brothers. Bienville himself had employed his Majesty's crews and vessels to send merchandise and brandy to Pensacola to sell.

"As soon as anything is needed for the service of the king, M. de Bienville knows immediately who can furnish it, and obliges him [the commissary] to buy it at a price of Bienville's fixing. . . . M. de Chateauguay will not render an account of his purchases and disbursements for the colony, but he has great care to charge the expenses he has personally been put to, which are reimbursed immediately by M. de Bienville. . . . Bienville had opposed the reception of Hervé as almoner of the fort, and had given orders to De la Salle to pay a Jesuit in his place. Two thirds of the flour sent by the Government was lacking on arrival of the vessels, which were loaded instead with merchandise for Bienville and his officers, who sold to the colonists, making enormous profits. Bienville also buys from the king at twenty-five per cent above cost, and sells to the colonists at four hundred. . . . Iberville had written a very menacing letter to him, complaining of his fidelity to the service of the king, and suggesting, among other things, that it would be easy for him to render false accounts and counterfeit the signature of the late commissary, the Sieur de Becancourt."

M. d'Iberville had also retained the orders upon the Treasury for expenses in Louisiana, to cover advances which he pretended to have made.

"I leave your Highness to judge of the character of the man, who passes in your mind for something quite different. I have in hand the proof of what I advance."

Diverging from the interests of the colony a moment, the scribe speaks of his own affairs. He begs permission to represent to the minister that he cannot live, with his family, on his moderate salary, in a country where everything is exorbitantly high, and he, the only officer who is perfectly obedient to the orders of the king, is not engaged in commerce. He hopes the minister will throw a favourable glance upon an unfortunate wretch who has sacrificed a great number of years without any advancement, others, on the contrary, reaping the harvest of his labours; M. d'Iberville, besides, threatening to put another in his place. He had married a girl of quality, recommended by Madame la Grande Duchesse (the "*Journal Historique*" avers that the second wife, like the first, was a hospital girl), and that his numerous family of children rendered the Government rations, suppressed by Iberville, a necessity, etc.

Whether through indiscretion on the part of the writer, or, as he leads one to expect, from a violation of the mail, it is apparent that the spirit, if not the contents, of the letters became known to the persons most concerned; an effort on behalf of Bienville resulted.

Father Gravier wrote a letter, — a studiously disinterested and politic one, — giving the news of the colony

in a general, casual manner, which, however, pointedly answered De la Salle's important items : —

“The fort and town could not have been better placed. Fruit and grain grew well on the soil, but the colonists needed negroes to clear the land. It had been proposed to remove the town to the mouth of the river, in order to be nearer Massacre Island, where the ships land; but the water was brackish there, and the establishment would be too far away from the Mobilians, Tohomes, and Apalaches, who had to be kept under hand. A fort was necessary at Massacre Island. The trade in peltry would be good if the French had an establishment among the Illinois and on the Ohio. . . .

“M. de Bienville was very clever in managing the Indians; he knew many of their languages. He had given four leagues of land along the Mobile to the Apalaches; he was often obliged to give presents to these savages and to those settled in the neighbourhood of the fort. He assists all the colonists who are in need, and shares with them what little provisions he can obtain, so that they are all very contented.

“The garrison was very weak; nothing could be done without the Canadians, who were very necessary for Indian expeditions.”

The letter of De Boisbriant went straight from his mind to his object : —

“The curate, De la Vente, had declared himself openly against the Sieur de Bienville without cause. I would have let them settle their differences alone, if the service of his Majesty was not concerned. The Sieur de la Vente wished to persuade the colonists that the misery they were in for want of food came from the Sieur de Bienville's not informing his Majesty of the necessity of sending vessels

oftener to Mobile; but not being able to gain anything by this, because the *Sieur de Bienville* assists the colonists as much as he can, and at any rate they are contented, he turned to the soldiers, a great many of whom are sick, and under pretext of sympathy in their sufferings he had distributed the money remitted to him, through *La Salle*, by order of *Bienville*, as a charity of his own; giving them to understand that he continually represented their wretchedness to *Bienville*, who paid no attention to it.

"The curate boasted to every one that he would have the *Sieur de Bienville* recalled, and he had the temerity so to threaten him himself, with great bursts of temper, to which *M. de Bienville* had answered with a great deal of self-control. All of the ecclesiastics who are with *M de la Vente* suffer much from his ill-temper. A man with such a temper is not at all fit for the establishment of such a colony. All the inhabitants ask with fervour that he be recalled, and there are even many who would have quit here if they had had the means."

Chateauguay, for his part, wrote asking permission to return to France, alleging the usual convenient excuse of ill health.

CHAPTER XIV.

1706-1710.

IBERVILLE died of the yellow fever at Havana on the 9th of July, 1706. Chateauguay, returning from one of his trips to the island, brought the news to the colony the September following.

The great Canadian's last expedition was another and a necessary step towards the realization of his policy of French domination of Southern North America,—a domination which, with the Gulf States, as we call them, must include the Gulf itself. The English, with passive, if not active, co-operation, were to be driven out of the Antilles by constant waylayings of their fleet, revolts incited among their negroes, and "filibustering" away of their islands. His past encounters with the English seemed to warrant, in his own mind, his self-confidence regarding future transactions with them. His proved intrepidity, coolness, emergency capabilities, and freedom from scrupulous restraints, united with his developing political force and sagacity, would seem to warrant others in surmising, had he lived, not only great national changes in the Mexican waters, with his league of kinsmen and compatriots, but even the formation of a new independent power therein.

Barely recovered from the illness which had hung upon him since his second visit to Louisiana, he left France with

an armament, purposing to make a descent upon Barbadoes and other English islands of the Antilles, and to intercept the English-American convoys. Landing at Martinique for a reinforcement of two thousand filibusters, he heard that the English, apprised of his coming, were already prepared for him, and had taken measures to prevent an uprising of the negroes. He threw himself, therefore, upon the little islands of Nevis and St. Christopher, and captured them inside and out, their governors, inhabitants, negroes, vessels in port, armed and loaded merchantmen, and levied such a contribution upon them as inundated momentarily Martinique, his bank of deposit, with sudden wealth. After this exploit he made up his mind to attack the Carolina coast; but stopping at Havana, where an epidemic was raging, to take on a thousand Spaniards, he lost eight hundred men, many officers, and his own life. His death was almost a vital blow to his foundling colony; and Bienville, not long in finding out the weakening of his own position, unsupported by the influence of the feared Iberville, wrote during the next February to the minister, petitioning for leave of absence and reinstatement to his old position in the marine.

"It would be very sad, my Lord," he says, "if for having remained here to establish this colony, I should be deprived of my promotion. I hope you will kindly consider my past services and those I am actually rendering. I have no reward to expect except from your Highness, of whom I ask a lieutenancy of vessel. The late M. d'Iberville, under whom I learned my profession, could have answered for my capacity, particularly in regard to the marine. You know, my Lord, that we have never had a patron with your Highness, and that it is you yourself who put a price upon

our services. The king gives me twelve hundred livres a year, which would not suffice for three months, exposed as I am every day to the visits of the Spaniards, ever entailing new expenses upon me, in a place where everything is exorbitantly high."

He again explains the condition and needs of the settlement. There was constant illness in the spring, when they should be sowing, among the unacclimated colonists. They could not, single-handed, cultivate enough land to render themselves entirely self-supporting. It was the irregularity and delay in sending vessels from France that produced crises from lack of necessities not produced in the country, which he had to buy at the king's expense. He had not been able to build the fort promised among the Chickasaws, for lack of men to garrison it, and merchandise to trade with the Indians. The lack of men had also forced him to abandon the fort on the Mississippi, and it was important to have a fort there to keep the Indians in check. Of the hundred men that should form the two royal companies, he counted but forty-five, of whose youth and physical incapability he complained, and of those the captains were missing, Chateauguay being always at sea, and Volezard not having yet arrived. He did not know what would have become of the colony if he had dismissed the Canadians, according to the orders of M. Begon. He reminded the minister again that Massacre Island should be fortified.

The small bloody affairs of the Indians had taken another kaleidoscopic turn. Along the Mississippi there seemed to be a general relapse towards natural barbarities and forced migrations. The Cluetimachas about

the same time declared war against their neighbours, the Touachas. These last, Bienville managed to reconcile, however, before they came to blows. St. Denis was sent against the Clierthimachas, to punish them for the death of the missionary, and also to settle another outstanding account for some Frenchmen killed several years before. He returned with ten cabins of women and children, whom he had surprised and captured for slaves, and one warrior who had boasted of killing St. Casme, whom, after consultation, he says, with his officers, Bienville had executed in the open square of the fort by a blow on the head.

He himself led a hundred and twenty Canadians and Indians to the relief of Pensacola, again a prey to the fire and slaughter of the English Indians. When he arrived, however, the enemy had retired. The Spaniards, aware at last of the usefulness of Indian allies, begged Bienville to send back the Apalaches, Touachas, Pensacolas, and Choctaws to their first allegiance to Spain; asking him also to instruct them, the Spaniards, in the art of retaining it, — which was about the last kindness Bienville or his Government had any idea of rendering; the ministerial letters according perfectly with Iberville's and Bienville's policy of doing all possible amicable injury to the Spanish tenure of the country.

From Vera Cruz, by the same indefatigable mail-carrier, came the news of De Noyou's death, — another weakening of the family league, and another loss to the colony.

One small vessel, loaded with brandy, salt, and tobacco, sailed on a trading venture into the port of Massacre Island during the winter of 1708, — a notable

event. She disposed of all of her cargo easily, but unfortunately furnished material for a future charge against Bienville, whom De la Salle accuses of selling apparently this same brandy to the colony of Pensacola. The commissary and the priest were still active in the fort, — almost as active as the Indian outside.

Bienville wrote that the commissary refused to allow Chateauguay anything for one of his voyages to Havana, and had even had the temerity to tear up the order given by Bienville for it. He had likewise some time before refused to give an Indian chief the presents ordered by Bienville, tearing up that order also. The colonists were unable to obtain from him the money due them by the king, the commissary insisting he had no more money belonging to the king. Bienville and De Boisbriant had gone over his accounts and had found a credit to the king still of twenty-four hundred livres, and a balance from the two thousand piastres which Bienville had been forced to borrow from a merchant in Martinique to relieve the past scarcity. De la Salle claimed this as an equivalent of the lodgings and rations due him by the Government, and for payment for his trip to Pensacola. Bienville and De Boisbriant convinced him, however (so Bienville says), that his journey to Pensacola was for the service of the king and in the line of his duty, that there were spacious lodgings assigned to him in the fort, and that it was not the intention of the king that the commissary should draw rations. All the response that Bienville could obtain from the commissary was that Bienville was no longer in a position to hurt him now that his protector and solicitor at the side of the minister, Iberville, was dead.

"I know," confesses Bienville, "that he has written to you that I have threatened to remove him from the control of the magazine. It is true, in face of his insult, I did so threaten him, in the presence of my officers, who urged me to it; but as he has not rendered any accounts of his office for five years, I thought it better to stand him than to come to such an extremity."

The commander then passes to the muscular administration of the spiritual adviser of the colony. De la Vente had laid the chapel of the fort under interdict, and had performed his ecclesiastical functions in his kitchen, situated at the other end of the town, refusing a house which the inhabitants had offered him. The parochial church which Bienville had begun to build for him, and of which he had taken such formal and ceremonious possession, he had refused to finish, pretending that it was too small for him. It had consequently remained open, exposed to wind and weather, and had recently been blown down in a gale. The grand vicar of the Bishop of Quebec, who had come to Mobile seeking assistance for his mission, had removed the interdict from the chapel and brought the priest to reason, obliging him to take the house offered. Many persons had given him, Bienville, certificates of the "ridiculous manners" of the priest, some of which he proceeds to describe:—

"The priest was a violent, passionate, double-faced man, capable by his talk of leading the colonists to revolt if they did not have confidence in their commander. He brings divorce into households, publicly insults the women, baptizes the children all naked outside the church,—a custom unknown in France, and which kills them here. There

was not a man to be found who took more pleasure in trouble than he. He had written to Pensacola for flour, saying, wrongfully, as the Spaniards themselves acknowledged, that Bienville was starving them to death. A lamentable thing to show thus to strangers the dissensions existing in the colony! Bienville could not relate all the hard things said of himself and his officers, which the priest had been forced to retract. He wrote voluminously to his superior, with whom he threatens them all; but he could only write falsehoods and calumnies, which he could not prove. Bienville relied upon the goodness of the minister to render justice to him, and to the colony that peace which the Jesuits maintained, but which this curate had entirely banished. . . . In a country like this," he interjects with some pathos, "where not a single pleasure is known, one might at least hope for a suitable pastor."¹

One very small cartridge in the epistolary fusillade, perhaps an offset to Gravier's shot, appears in an unexploded state among the manuscript copies of all this correspondence. It is an undated, unaddressed missive from the Superior of the Gray Sisters, who had been sent out with the marriageable girls; and the charge she makes against the commander has the merit at least of a reasonable amount of veracity and momentousness, even read as it is after a space of nearly two centuries. She describes herself as being subjected to the spiritual and manual training of the Indian girls in the colony, and states that the *Sieur de Boisbriant* had had the intention of marrying her, but that *M. de Bienville* and his brother had prevented him; and that she was sure *M. de Bienville* had not the qualities needful for a governor of *Mobile*.

¹ From Margry's transcription.

CHAPTER XV.

1708.

It was nearly three years before the parent country again stretched out a hand towards the colony; and then it was not with a caressing palm, but with one nerved for chastisement: there might have been slowness in succouring, there was none in punishing. When Iberville's old ship, the "*Renommée*," sailed into the harbour of Massacre Island on the 10th of February, the air must have become sulphurous; for she was fraught with some of the thunder of Judgment Day. Every accusation that had gone out from Louisiana, returned from France with a warrant of condemnation; and for four years the busy pens of priest, scribe, and governor had been inditing accusations with lavish liberality.

In France, orders had been issued for the arrest of Lallemand, the supposed accomplice of Iberville, and an investigation instituted into the charges of peculation and appropriation of public funds brought against the dead commander, whose heirs were summoned to render an account of his pretended claims against the Government.¹ In order to remove, on this occasion

¹ In "*Histoire de Longueuil*," Iodoin and Vincent, it is stated that Iberville, as long as he lived, sustained the colony of Louisiana with loans of large sums, without interest, the treasury not

at least, any temptation to cupidity, the officers of the colony were allowed no freight whatever on the vessel, all the merchandise shipped being owned by the king, to be sold for his profit. As for the soldiers, the Minister of Marine had taken the precaution the year before to warn M. Begon that the low state of the Marine funds permitted the supplying only of the absolutely necessary ; consequently, no clothing could be sent them, as they were to be clothed in future every two years. (The soldiers had been already three years without clothing.) Of the amount of money necessary for expenses only one fourth was remitted.

Here the stint seemed to end ; of supersedure, investigation, advice, reproof, and directions, the supply was still undiminished in governmental centres.

A new governor, M. de Mui, was appointed, and a new commissary, M. Diron d'Artaguet, who was sent by the minister particularly to repon upon the affairs of the colony and draw them if possible out of the hopeless condition into which they appeared to have fallen.

M. de Mui, a Norman and an officer of merit, according to the recommendation of the time, who had worked his way upwards, grade by grade, from ensign to the governorship of Cayenne, whence he was recalled to assume that of Louisiana, had no opportunity of responding to the minister's expectations of him. He died at Havana on his way out.

Bienville received his dismissal in a letter from the minister being able to furnish them. His advances for his last armament greatly reduced the heritage of his widow and four minor children.


ister, who, without circumlocution, informed him of all the charges against him made by La Salle and others, — malversation, speculation, illicit trade in skins, and sending a pirogue to intercept the curate's letter, which was not received in France. He was told frankly that he was to be called to account for it, and if found guilty, to be punished severely. Subjoined was an order for him to return to France on the "*Renommée*" as soon as he had given M. de Muy all the information needed for his government ; but he was not to leave without De Muy's permission.

The governor presumptive carried a provisional order for his predecessor's arrest, and voluminous instructions for his guidance. The instructions hold a careful equilibrium between respect for Bienville's advice and services, and recognition of the suspicions aroused in the ministerial mind against him, and the fear of losing for the Government any of the benefit of the former, and of not gaining profit by the latter. M. de Muy was to put himself in thorough and available possession of all Bienville's knowledge relating to the country and his method of governing it, and to follow his policy of dealing with the Indians and Spaniards. The proposition to exchange Indian for African slaves from the islands, of which the king approved, was to be considered and adopted, if it were true, as Bienville wrote, that the English so exchanged their slaves captured from Indian allies of the French. The construction of a mill was also approved ; but the money advanced by the king was to be returned, with considerable profits of interest, to be acquired out of the grain ground ; and *à propos* of profits, as it were, the twenty-five per cent profit,

at which Bienville sold the goods supplied by his Majesty, was not sufficient, considering the risk and cost of transportation. A special injunction was added against trading in skins: "his Majesty is resolved not to permit the entry into France of any skins that come by the way of Louisiana, in order to sustain the province of Canada, as he had promised to do when he engaged in the establishment of Louisiana. The king wished to be correctly informed concerning the exact utility the province would be to France commercially; if it were to be disadvantageous to France, he would abandon it, without going on any further with the enterprise. As soon as possible, a detailed account of such commercial prospects was to be sent to the king, especially in regard to what commerce could be expected from the Spaniards, and what riches could be hoped for from that quarter," in case of a war. "And I wish," ends the minister, with a mind for small as well as large interests, "that you could give another name than Mobile to the place. Look for one that would suit, and let me know."

The memoir then proceeds to deal with the issue that had brought about the change of administration,—quarrels between the governor, the commissary, and the priest; and strenuously with the charges of the two latter against the former, every one of which was carefully enumerated. De Muy was to inform the minister of all the facts, especially of the burning of the Alabamas and the cruel treatment of prisoners, and the ruinous prices (for his own profit) put upon his Majesty's goods.

Between the writing of this and the sailing of the "*Renommée*," additional letters from De la Salle



arrived, and the certainty of Bienville's guilt became a foregone conclusion with Pontchartrain. He added a postscript to De MUY, enclosing extracts from De la Salle's last, with an order for Bienville's arrest and conveyance to France as a prisoner, expressing his opinion that if De la Salle's charges were true, Bienville merited the punishment of the guilty. De MUY and D'ARTAGUETTE were together to conduct an investigation of his conduct, and if in their opinion the facts and practices set forth were proved, he was to be arrested and sent prisoner to France. If their verdict were otherwise, the *lettre de cachet* was to be returned to the minister.

A letter to D'ARTAGUETTE of the same date, and important, was tempered with a little vacillation in the foregone conclusion, or perhaps an afterthought of ministerial or manly equity in regard to the accused. "But I recommend not to adopt this course, unless it appears clear to you both that he merits the treatment, and not otherwise." The captain of the "*Renommée*" was informed of the charges against the accused, and given an order to receive him on the "*Renommée*," conduct him to France, and deliver him to the commandant of the first port in which he landed, to be detained, awaiting further orders from the king.

Bienville at once, he says in his letter to the minister, February 25th, petitioned the captain of the "*Renommée*" to put his second officer in command of the province, so that he might return to France; but the captain had refused, for fear of the minister's displeasure, and so he had been forced to remain in command. He had not been able to learn from D'ARTAGUETTE the nature

of the charges against him (evidently the official charges, for he had received them personally from the minister). D'Artaguet had told him that his orders were not to communicate them, and that consequently he, Bienville, was in the hard condition of not being able to justify himself. He then begged D'Artaguet to proceed alone with the investigation of the charges preferred against him, and to interrogate all the colonists, with the exception of three men, whom he specifies by name, giving his reasons. D'Artaguet could easily inform himself of the truth; the testimony of the inhabitants would be his justification. As for sending a pirogue to capture the curate's letters, Bienville had proved, in the presence of D'Artaguet, that the letters in question had been given to an officer, the priest agreeing, saying that he was sorry he had written what he had, and no more attention should be paid to it. As for the execution of the Clierthimacha, his defence was the declaration that "the Indians always kill as many of their enemies as they have had killed by them, without which it is considered disgraceful to speak of accommodation. To act otherwise would be to expose one's self to be thought of as a coward. In the beginning of the wars in Canada there was opposition to putting the Iroquois to death; on the contrary, they were sent away with handsome presents, and it was seen that they mocked us, treating the French like women who did not dare kill them for fear of their revenge. Monsieur the Count of Frontenac finally took the stand of burning them, men, women, and children, cruelly, which had so good an effect that afterwards they did not dare come in war against us without fear." Nevertheless, he affirms that he had

taken care not to kill a single woman, although the Indians kill women with men, to satisfy their revenge. He had always returned them to their villages, with the message that the French thought it beneath them to kill women.

Breaking away from his personal affairs, he writes with indignation of the small assistance sent after so patient an endurance. The colony was in consternation to find, on the arrival of the "*Renommée*," that no provision had been made for the payment of the garrison, to whom two years' arrears were due. The magazine was bare of provisions, the men were naked, and they could procure nothing, as no one would give them credit on the bills of the treasury of the Marine. For six months they had subsisted on Indian corn. He excused the highness of prices with which the minister had reproached him, by the difficulties of his position in a time of scarcity, and complained that De la Salle would not insert in his estimates his, Bienville's, statements of what was needed for the establishment. "It seems to me that he is more interested in the ruin than in the progress of the colony." Although indispensable for expeditions against, and treaties with, the Indians, the Canadians had been discharged, as the minister commanded. There was no longer any boat for sea service; the brigantine had gone to the bottom, worm-eaten. It was impossible for a boat to last many years in these waters, without sheathing, on account of the worms. There was no longer any missionary on the Mississippi. The Jesuits had a fine mission on the Missouri, and there was among the Tamaroas a foreign missions priest who had merit and showed zeal; but he knew neither

how to make himself beloved nor how to instruct the savages. There was a foreign missions priest then in Mobile who would not go on a mission for fear of being killed by the Indians. "I must confess to you, my Lord, that these gentlemen of the foreign missions, far from running to martyrdom, flee it, as one has just done here. Every day one sees Jesuits maltreated by the Indians without abandoning their missions; on the contrary, it seems to inspire them, and they never become discouraged." Proceeding with a stroke that demonstrates that the Indians were not the only foes with whom he practised retaliation, —

"The Rev. Father Gravier has arrived here [he returned on the "*Renommée*"] with an order from your Highness for me to give him men to ascend to his mission; but as the whole of my garrison and three fourths of the colonists did not perform their Easter duties last year on account of their want of confidence in the gentleman of the foreign missions, I invited him to remain here until Easter, so that the people of the colony can have *liberty of conscience*. This good father is known here and loved. I am sure that not one in the colony this year will miss the opportunity offered by the father for performing their Easter duties, no one failing in them as long as we had only Jesuits."

Among other worries, the priest was causing great trouble to Frenchmen not living in families, who had women slaves to serve them. Until he hears from the minister on the subject, he obliges the masters to send their slaves to pass the night where there are French women. He again asks for leave of absence, and the payment of his maintenance by the Government, being already in debt over eleven thousand livres.

In this letter Bienville advanced the idea, which experience had ripened to conviction in his mind, and which, however obstinately he maintained it, met unfortunately with a more successfully obstinate opposition from higher authorities, that the true initiative of French prosperity in Louisiana lay not in the Gulf ports and in trade, but in agriculture and the colonization of the Mississippi River. It was a substitution of Iberville's grandiose scheme by a small practical policy of his own. He proposed to begin immediately, if the king would, once for all, assume the expense of sixty or eighty labouring emigrants with their families, — small families, as children are a charge at first. He would transport them through Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi, and settle them about the Bayagoulas, where (and his judgment is good to-day), he says, are the finest lands in the country.

D'Artaguet's reports were not only an acquittal, but a vindication of Bienville; they read like the common-sense conclusions of a man of business, although he does not fail with an insinuating notification to the minister that the commissary was lodged with the brother of Bienville, and that all three ate together every day.

After repeating the general items of Bienville's efforts among the Chickasaws and Choctaws, the machinations of the English, and the difficulties and hardships contended against in the past, he paints the particular condition of the colony, and gives a better idea than Bienville does of its wretchedness. The Canadians in service had not been paid in two years, they owed money everywhere, and would return to their wood-

ranging life unless girls were sent out for wives for them. More attention should be paid to the seed shipped ; a quarter of the last wheat arrived spoiled. Cows, mares, and stallions could easily be procured in Havana, and brought on the incoming ships. Sheep should be sent from France. There was no longer any boat in the colony, — a flat boat had been built to transport freight from Massacre Island to Mobile ; another would be built. The colonists needed the mill, and would pay the king for his advance in money to construct it. A fort was needed on Massacre Island ; the garrison, consisting of only ninety men, was kept in a miserable condition physically, by the necessity of keeping up constant guard duty there. There were only eleven inhabitants in the whole establishment not in the pay of the king, and these would be a long time in making a maintenance out of their lands, unless they could exchange Indians for negro slaves, as the English did. If this expedient were not admissible, negroes should be sent them. Sooner or later, — he echoes Bienville, — the establishment would have to be transferred to the high banks of the Mississippi. The land on the Mobile overflowed. The ground lower down on the river *was* better than where the fort was situated, but it would ruin the few colonists to make a change now. In the short time he had been there, he had only heard who had appeared to him the least biassed in the affair of the quarrel between the commander and the commissary. They all declared themselves satisfied with Bienville and his conduct, and thought it would be desirable for him to retain the governorship. Only one of these witnesses had charged that the royal vessels had been

sailed in the interests of Bienville and his brother, and that they kept a store, under the name of a relative, in which they sold merchandise and powder at exorbitant prices. He, D'Artaguet, had examined particularly the shop about which so much noise had been made. It was kept by a poor widow, burdened with four children, to whom, as to others, merchandise was given out of the royal stores, on payment of price. He had found in it only a few pairs of shoes and some pieces of old iron. It had not appeared to him that Bienville had usurped the functions of the commissary, and he was persuaded that the differences complained of by the latter were in the main of little consequence. In regard to the game and beef brought by the Indians, all the inhabitants agreed that Bienville had made a distribution of it among them all, and had not sold any. And — a very apparent deduction, it would seem — it was not possible to carry on any trade at Mobile without ready money, and none was sent out. The whole garrison was very poor, as well as the colonists, and all were in need of everything.

The curate was not the kind of Christian formed by the beatitudes. In a doughty letter to his superior he let fly a volley of blows about the head of his antagonist, maintaining everything, retracting nothing, giving quite a different reason for the performance of their Easter duties by the men, and still averring that he dare not write in his justification, for fear his letter would be suppressed.

De la Salle forwarded to the minister the original letter of Iberville to him, on which he had based his charges ; but its language was found too vague to sub-

stantiate even a suspicion of dishonesty. D'Artaguet rendered to the minister the detailed account asked for. All things considered, it was more creditable to his Canadian subaltern than to himself. One hundred and twenty men constituted the entire force of the garrison, officers, soldiers, sailors, workmen, interpreters, priests, and boys. The colonists numbered in all one hundred and fifty-seven, — twenty-four men, twenty-eight women, twenty-five children, eighty Indian slaves, and sixty unattached Canadians, who could be fixed in the settlement with wives. Despite the dearth of food and distress from sickness, the live-stock had been spared in a measure that proves better than any documents the patient thrift of the settlers and the stability of their confidence in their venture. There were fifty milch cows, four bulls, forty calves, eight beeves, fourteen hundred hogs, and about two thousand chickens.

CHAPTER XVI.

1709-1711.

PONTCHARTRAIN appears to have experienced a quickening of conscience on the perusal of the statements he had called for from D'Artaguet; and the affairs of the colony received that ministerial looking into which they so sadly needed. He found out that the worst was true. The troops had not been paid in two years. The money ordered to Louisiana had simply not been sent. "It is not surprising," he wrote to Begon, "that the colony suffers to the degree shown me, if the treasurer of the marine does not remit the funds ordered." The missing amounts were traced in a sharp correspondence, and fifteen thousand livres recovered, which were ordered to be sent with the appropriations for the current year; but these appropriations themselves could not be paid in full, for the best of reasons.

It was a time — the period immediately following the official venality of naval officers — when nothing was paid in the Marine; consequently, when the royal navy of France began to sink to those depths of poverty and degradation, and her colonies to the suffering and neglect to which an extravagant government, overtaken by bankruptcy, abandoned them.

Deprived of his efficient arm of supply and defence, Iberville, with his colonial project — one might call it speculation — ever calling for the margins which its natural development required, and which a depleted exchequer forbade, Pontchartrain saw no choice but abandonment, or transference of it to the shoulders of one of those convenient porters of heavy financial transactions, — a company. He began to look around for one upon which to shift his burden, giving directions, meanwhile, that the necessary supplies of food and clothing be sent by the first vessel. But even this first vessel, it was found, the Government could not afford to fit out. No company being forthcoming, private enterprise was solicited; and the usual eventualities attending individual efforts kept the matter in abeyance until two years and seven months had elapsed before the *Sieur de Remonville* could be found, terms arranged, and the “*Renommée*” loaded with the necessities for the waiting colony.

In September, 1711, she sailed into the harbour of Massacre Island.

If the colony was in poverty three years before, it should have been in destitution now, — and it was, for all that the Government had furnished; but necessity had not failed in her teachings, and necessity had never a better coadjutor than *Bienville*. As a royal colony, the place had certainly been dispensed from existing, and the *Sieur de Remonville*, had he had an experienced eye in such matters, must have remarked that he had come to a very promising beginning of a filibuster settlement, — indeed, so promising was it that *D’Artaguet* seriously discussed the proposition made by a thousand freebooters from Carthage to settle there.


There was, in such a country, no starvation to fear. The salt-meat was exhausted ; but there was always, with the Indians to supply corn, an emergency provision of flour kept on hand. The most serious anticipatory calamity was the threatened exhaustion of the supply of gunpowder ; but this was averted by a timely loan from St. Domingo. Two or three brigantines found their way from the islands across the Gulf to them : one, a slaver, to whom the colonists sold some of their Indians ; another, a trader, but the establishment was too poor to purchase the cargo. The captain put the vessel itself up at auction, and on the advice of D'Artaquette the officers bought it, in order to have some means of communication with the French and Spanish islands.

During the summer months, in order to spare his stores of provisions, and, although he does not say so, to diminish the ravages of the periodical malady, which seems to have existed endemically, Bienville allowed his unmarried men to disperse themselves among the adjacent Indian tribes.¹ It was a privilege of which the Frenchmen, all *coureurs d'aventures*, if not *coureurs de bois*, eagerly availed themselves, and one which must have furnished rare results of romantic frolic and pleasure, to judge by the written accounts of one of them, Pennicaut. The political results, the good-fellowship established between the white men and the Indians (there is no record of an abuse of their privilege by the white men), and the consequent ensuing sense of security and stability to the feeble colony, seem not to have been sufficiently estimated by the chroniclers of the time, al-

¹ The quartering of his men upon them, with which some American historians reproach him.

though these results must have formed the basis of Bienville's self-confidence in treating of Indian affairs. Not only personal, but hereditary experience proved the value of just such amicable commingling of the two races, when the civilized minority wished to gain the mastery over the barbarous majority.

Pennicaut relates that, foreseeing a scarcity of provisions, three times he solicited the favour of summering with the Indians, and obtained it, thanks to the commander's knowledge of his good character and the good character of the men he was careful to select for the excursion. His pen indeed dwells with such gusto on the description of this free forest life, and under the glow of reminiscence bursts into such an effusion of voluble confidences, that the historic loses itself in the fictional value of his journal. Among the Natchez, but more particularly among the Colopissas, on the border of Lake Pontchartrain, he lived what has become the staple of native American romance and poetry, — long boating expeditions, days of hunting, nights of dancing and frolicking with the young folks, around the camp fire, under the green leaves. A violinist was taken on one excursion, and there was teaching of songs and the gavotte and cotillon to the pretty Indian girls, the sombre woods resounding with merriment, and learning from them all that merry-hearted, light-o'-love Frenchmen could amuse themselves by learning from pretty Indian girls ; and the always effusive adieux, tear-besprinkled by the young girls, when the summons came to return to the fort. If it was half as charmingly lived as it is charmingly told by the young carpenter, it must have been not with unmitigated sorrow that the unmarried portion of the



garrison saw the river rise to a damaging height to the Indians' corn-crop. Bienville's influence with the natives, his command of their dialects, his — according to their standard — fair and just treatment of them, never forgetting a promise, and never forgiving an injury, prevented the complete success of the English effort to include Mobile in the annual raids of their Indians upon the Spanish possessions. The Choctaw and Chickasaw chiefs, as vacillating in their enmities as in their friendships, were subsidized by continual presents into a state of at least ineffectual hesitation, and their coalition, which at any time could have swept the handful of Frenchmen out of existence, obstructed.

There was an attack made on the villages of the Mobilians and Tohomes, but they defended themselves so bravely that by the time Bienville arrived with his reinforcements, in answer to his allies' summons, they were glad to beat a retreat, leaving in the hands of the Mobilians and Tohomes five prisoners, who were burned next day. Shortly afterwards, spies brought word of a tremendous armament among the English Indians, and of a projected attack on the French settlement by way of the river. The fear that this attack might be seconded by one from the sea, threw Bienville and the colony into a state of great uneasiness.

What they dreaded, the Spaniards experienced. For two months Pensacola lay surrounded by hostile Indians, the garrison locked in the fort by the knowledge of certain death sighting the first venturer outside. Their only food was barley-bread soaked in water. When that gave out, the governor wrote Bienville, they would be reduced to picking up shell-fish along the shore for

food. He asked a loan from the French ; but there were only a few barrels of corn and flour to send him.

Successive overflows continued to destroy successive corn-crops of the Indians, until there seemed no prospect for other nourishment than acorns. In 1711, Fort St. Louis itself stood under water. In the extremity of lack of provisions, powder, and men, a council of officers was called, and it was decided to concentrate forces and means, and bring the two posts nearer together, by removing the fort colony nearer the island. The transfer was made immediately by the anxious colonists, willing at any sacrifice to secure a way of escape from inland attack, to Massacre Island, or along the coast to the friendly Spaniards, and also to be nearer the incoming vessels of provisions.

Massacre Island thrived and prospered amid all untoward circumstances, with the sure persistency of a port town. Inhabitants drifted to it from the fort, from the country, dropped upon it from vessels, and like all vagrant seed, they took root and flourished. Houses were built, stores set up, trees set out, and gardens planted, until, as Bienville said, it was a pleasure to see it. And the property accumulated was considered so valuable that the loss inflicted by an enterprising English invader was estimated at fifty thousand pounds.

All hope of the " Renommée " had been abandoned ; vessels were sent to Vera Cruz to buy food, if peradventure the governor there would sell again on credit — which he had refused on the last application — when the belated vessel arrived. Although the relief she brought was mediocre, Bienville wrote to the minister, still it gave them courage to proceed, and freed them from the

fear which was beginning to take shape, that they would be forced to abandon their establishment after such an expenditure of work and trouble. He put in a plea for the soldiers, who were so naked that they were objects of compassion. He had given them some deer-skins, out of which they had made coverings. And the colonists, he said, should be encouraged by the reimbursement of the advances they had made to the Government.

D'Artaguet, preparing to return on the "*Renommée*," showed Bienville the hitherto concealed instructions, written four years before to De Muy, concerning him. Bienville merely mentioned the fact to the minister, without again referring to the charges against himself, or attempting any further defence ; but he ventures to add : "It is thirteen years that I have been here. I have passed my youth and used up my health here, and I certainly, my Lord, have not made any profit. Far from it, as I can prove to you, I have been obliged to contract debts to sustain the expenditures which I could not dispense with making, to retain the savages who come down upon me in numbers, to gain whom I am forced to pet them in a thousand ways that cost money, and the Spaniards, who make us frequent visits, and whom we cannot avoid receiving, for they sometimes assist us in our need." He asked for a concession of land, in extent from half a league below his present establishment to the *Rivière aux Perles*, to be erected into a fief, with permission to give it his name, and also prays for his promotion to the grade of lieutenant and for the cross of St. Louis. "After all my exposures and sufferings, and not having received a cent of my salary for seven years, I think I merit them."

In obedience to the desire expressed by the minister so long since, in De Mury's instructions, the name of Mobile was changed into (to a surety a piece of D'Artaguet's wit at the expense of the young Canadian and the minister) *Immobile*, that of Massacre Island to Dauphin Island.

Arrived in France, D'Artaguet wrote his report from Bayonne, — a characteristic document of blunt directness: —

“The soldiers were deserting to the English of Carolina on account of their misery. They would desert to the savages if the latter had not received orders to arrest and fetch them back. Two equipments of clothing were due them. They were naked. For the most part of the time they lived on beaten corn boiled with meat. The coats and shirts brought out by the ‘*Renommée*’ were spoiled. The number of colonists was too small for them to undertake any considerable work; they were moreover ruined by the extravagance of their wives [evidently the exported girls], who were naturally lazy, and had only come there for libertinage and idleness. However, a taste for trade with Spain was developing; but the English, by burning Massacre Island, had destroyed all the gains from it.”

He reiterates his opinion as to the importance and advantage of Louisiana to the French; speaks of the dissatisfaction and jealousy of the Spaniards, “which can be laughed at; the only people to fear are the English, and they can be kept off by the Indians, and particularly by an establishment on the Wabash [Ohio].”

During the winter of 1709, D'Artaguet had accompanied Bienville to the place on the Mississippi, between it and Lake Pontchartrain, where the latter wished to make his new settlement. A few colonists were already

there, to whom Bienville had given tracts of land. They had planted corn, which he, D'Artaguet, saw, and which was very fine ; and he quoted their opinion that a hundred colonists could support themselves in the same locality. He concludes by saying that he had not seen the colour of his salary for five years.

The " Renommée " departed, and the colony settled down to another period of governmental oblivion. But there were mitigations in their lot which made the future more hopeful than the past had ever been.

In 1710 De la Salle had died, and shortly afterwards De la Vente had taken his departure for France. Trade continued to sprout on Massacre, now Dauphin, Island. The peltry bought from Indians and *coureurs de bois*, which could not be exported to France, found ready sale in the Spanish possessions ; and garden vegetables and chickens brought in small supplies of cash from the ever-hungry garrison at Pensacola. The island itself had added a church to its attractions, — the gift of the Sieur de Remonville, pleased with the flourishing aspect of affairs there. The Apalaches, who had followed Bienville down the river, settled themselves on their assignment of land near the new fort. Here, under the spiritual charge of M. Hervé, they built themselves a church, and became so edifying a religious example, that the colonists used to jaunt out on Sundays and feast-days to see them perform their devotions and hear them sing the Latin hymns.

Another member of the Le Moyne family had come out to the new colony, in whose fortunes they evidently had confidence, — De Sainte-Hélène, a midshipman, son of Jacques Le Moyne de Sainte-Hélène, who had

received his death-wound at the siege of Quebec, in 1690.

The companionship of his nephew was not an unalloyed pleasure to the uncle, as will be seen. The nephew's first exploit was allowing his vessel to sink to the bottom in the harbour of Vera Cruz, where Bienville had sent him for provisions. Fortunately the new viceroy there, the Duke of Siñares, who had succeeded to the Duke of Albuquerque, was anxious to be on good terms with the French, and he replaced the lost boat with a brigantine, pretending that his delay in furnishing the provisions had been the cause of the accident. In the spring of 1712, Bienville finally had the satisfaction, not only of bringing the Alabamas to terms, but also of including all his Indian allies in one general peace.

CHAPTER XVII.

1712, 1713.

THE efforts of Pontchartrain which had procured the temporary relief of a Remonville were further successful. A rich merchant, the *Sieur Antoine de Crozat*, a capitalist and moneyed favourite of the court, after a two-years' negotiation was induced to relieve his royal master of the burdensome colony for what profit he could draw out of it, for the space of fifteen successive years. The charter of the trading privilege as it was, bristled with provisions and stipulations of all kinds for all manner of mutual protection to the two contractants; but to even a casual reader of *Bienville's* and *D'Artaguet's* official reports, they read like a handsome ceremonial preceding the shearing of a lamb. *D'Artaguet's* last report was dated Paris, Sept. 8, 1712. In face of it, in despite of it, *Crozat's* charter was signed on September 14th, but six days afterwards. *Crozat*, however, was not the only one to be pitied in this royal bargain. The king was to maintain the necessary military force in the country; civil affairs were to be confided to a council, as in the islands of *St. Domingo* and *Martinique*. *Crozat* was to be represented by three commissioners.


Bienville, without reference to the accusations against him, his vindication, or his appeals for leave of absence,

was unceremoniously assigned to what might be called the Indian department, — a position whose responsibilities were sharp enough to define themselves, but whose limitations were left to the uncertainties of future individual interpretation. Over all was to rule the new governor named to succeed M. de Muy, who had consumed the long interval since his appointment in endeavouring to reach his distant command, — a failure by land, necessitating a journey to France, and sailing thence. To him Crozat promptly attached a lien in the shape of an interest in his trading privilege.

In the policy to be carried out, the minister prescribed to his substitute an extract from Iberville's and Bienville's neglected scheme. Five posts were designated to be established and maintained, — one at Dauphin Island, where the governor was to reside in future, one at Mobile, one at the head of Mobile River, one on the Ohio, and one at Natchez, to be called Rosalie (after the Countess of Pontchartrain), — which, with the Mississippi and all its affluents and effluents, was to be under the command of Bienville, who was also to have the disposition of one half of the funds set aside for presents to the Indians.

In June, 1713, the "Baron de la Fasse," of forty guns, safely brought into harbour the new installation, personal, financial, and political. A more careful installation of personal, financial, and political disorder was never accomplished by even France in colonial history.

The object of Crozat was trade, not with Louisiana, but with the Spanish possessions ; his methods were the selfish ones of the alien monopolist. His intention was




to do for himself what Bienville and Iberville were trying to do in the interests of the colony. He proposed establishing a warehouse for his merchandise at Dauphin Island, and a line of trading brigantines to touch at all the Spanish ports between Pensacola, Vera Cruz, and the Campeche coast. It was a project of which the approaching peace (treaty of Utrecht) seemed to make the success plausible. But the same peace, which guaranteed his ships, liberated also the merchant marine of England. Not only this, the first trading nation, also the first treaty-making nation, of the world secured by this same peace, upon which Crozat rested his hopes, not only the closing of these same ports to French vessels, but the monopoly of the slave-trade. Crozat's charter, before he could put it into execution, was made, in fact, waste paper. His colony returned his indifference in kind, and frustrated as much as possible his extortionate attempts upon it by "filibustering" and smuggling. It was a losing fight, from the arrival of the "Baron de la Fasse," to principal and accessories.

Gascon by birth and by qualities, one may say, Cadillac had been, if not one of the foremost, one of the prominent French pioneers in America for twenty years. Indefatigable, shrewd, clever, he had, according to contemporary portraiture of him, not only ideas enough to equip himself with an Indian policy, a military policy, a regulation-of-royal-and-ecclesiastical-powers policy, and a colonization policy, but he had also been gifted with abundant strength of body and mind, tongue and pen, to enforce the same. He was a protégé of Frontenac, consequently an enemy of the Jesuits, against whom he would find a shot at any time in any of his policies.

With Iberville, he held that the great rivers running north and south must be held to France, if France wished to hold her American possessions ; and that New Orleans, Quebec, and his city, Detroit, were to be her sheet-anchors in the continent. The activity and enthusiasm which Cadillac threw into his services, his experiences, his studies, his reflections, his whole self, had secured him rapid advancement and solid recognition. An able manager of Indian affairs, reputed to be one of the ablest ; a veteran, if ever there was one, in the interne-cine strife between Church and State ; a post-graduate in official complications, having had his own personal experiences of accusations, trials, condemnations, investigations, and acquittals,— he had, in one word, the whole colonial question, general and particular, at his fingers' ends. His appointment, it would be supposed, would have been the *ne plus ultra* of administrative wisdom. His failure, however, might have been read in his very recommendations. He had too many policies, too much experience ; he knew too much to learn more, and too little for a different sphere and different circumstances. The result, as Louisiana experienced, was a middle-aged obstinacy which not only ignored other information, but utterly despised the possessors of it.

Like an old practitioner he went to work at Bienville and his colony, shaking, twisting, turning them until what he was determined to find in them was demonstrated beyond peradventure or shadow of turning in his mind, and then he enunciated (letter to minister, 25, 26 October, 1713) his opinion, or rather his contempt, of the whole affair committed to his charge. His rough frankness has at least the merit of honesty, for personally



his profit must have lain at least with a temporary palliation of what he considered the truth. This is his version of Bienville's pretty establishment of Dauphin Island :

"He had counted upon it one dozen fig-trees, which were very handsome ; three wild pear-trees and a little plum-tree about three feet high, which had seven poor plums upon it ; about thirty feet of vine, bearing in all nine bunches of grapes, some of them dried or rotting, the rest only a little ripe ; and forty plants of French melons and pumpkins. That was the Paradise, the Pomona, the Fortunate Isles of the Relations ! Pure fables !"

With small regard for Crozat's peace of mind, he proceeds, not only to damn any agricultural hopes from the soil, but the whole country itself, *in toto*, with the people it contained, — red, black, and white. But his description belies his desire, or rather temper : —

"I have already said that if the inhabitants have not cultivated tobacco and indigo, it is because they do not make anything by this culture. They have only been able to raise corn and vegetables. During the first years these harvests were abandoned. This permitted them to raise hogs and fowls, and to live passably. But during the last three years neither vegetables nor corn have come, either by excess of wet or drought, and the suffering has been very great. All the commerce, heretofore, has only consisted of timber, deer, bear, and wild-cat skins. The *coureurs de bois* get the skins and slaves from the Indians, and sell them to the colonists. The skins were resold to the Spaniards at Pensacola or to the vessels that came from the islands ; the slaves were employed in sawing timber and clearing the land. The colonists carried to

Pensacola, where there was no clearing, their vegetables and corn, and this trade threw a little money into the colony, and gave the colonists the means of buying from the islands. This is all, and the only commerce here; and it has not enriched the colonists, for they are very poor, but it has enabled them to subsist. . . . If there is anything to wonder at, it is that with so much poverty and so little commerce the inhabitants should have consented to remain in the colony. But it is to be remembered that it is recognized that the land will produce indigo, silk, and tobacco, although the colonists have not cultivated them, out of ignorance of their culture, and fear that the colony would be abandoned. . . . They awaited peace with impatience, persuaded that when peace was made, vessels would come which would give a sustenance to commerce, and that by the way the garrison would then be treated, some conclusions might be reached as to the ulterior views of the Government in regard to the establishment. . . . According to the proverb, 'bad country, bad people,' one can say that there is a collection here formed from the dregs of Canada, *gens de sac et de corde*, without respect for religion or for government, addicted to vice, and principally to Indian women, whom they prefer to French women. It is very difficult to remedy it, when his Majesty desires that they should be governed with mildness, and when he wishes a governor to comport himself so that the inhabitants shall make no complaint against him. On arriving, I found the whole garrison in the woods among the savages, who provided for them with their guns, and thus for want, not only of bread, but of corn, the harvests having failed for two consecutive years; and even if it had not failed, it is to be remembered that the harvest saves over here only from one year to the other, the vermin ruining it entirely. The lieutenant of the king, Bienville, came here at the age of eighteen, without having served either in France or Canada.

His brother, Chateauguay, came here still younger, as well Major Boisbriant. There was no one here of the profession to train the soldiers, therefore they are badly disciplined. . . . The colony could not be poorer than it is at present. The Canadians who are here are returning to Canada, and nevertheless without them no enterprise is possible. Fifty of them should be maintained in the service of the king to make expeditions. If God gives me health, I shall try to elevate the colony, which is not worth a straw at present. But if it is to be preserved, at least one hundred new soldiers are needed, well equipped and provided with good bread and meat. We need Canadians and sailors; and among the troupes there must be labourers, masons, stone-cutters, carpenters, millers. [He asked for a church.] I think the inhabitants would be delighted not to have one. According to the priests and missionaries, the greater portion of them have not approached the sacraments for seven or eight years. The soldiers have not performed their Easter duties, following the example of Bienville, their commandant, Boisbriant, their major, Chateauguay, captain, and Sérigny, a minor officer, — to all of whom I declared I would so inform your Majesty, which made them break out against me, with the help of the commissary, Duclos."

Cadillac assuming missionary duties after his expressed opinions of clerical interferences in the past, has a truly humorous touch; but he was not one to be restrained by even humour in the exercise of his duties or pen. He charges point blank into the natural enemy of all commandants, the commissary. Duclos and he agreed about no one thing in the colony: the fortifications, furloughs, presents to the Indians, all were in dispute between them. It would be difficult, he predicted, for their union to subsist much longer. Duclos had refused to go over the accounts to examine the justice of the

complaints against Bienville, and the truth about that officer was not obtainable. Not so Cadillac's theory about it: —

"I have learned that De Muy, dying in Havana, M. Ducasse, who was there, took all the official papers relating to the government of Louisiana, and addressed them to M. de Bienville, who found out in the instructions the suit that was to be instigated against him. He profited by the knowledge, like a clever man; scattering and sending out of his government all who would testify against him, either sailors or Canadians in the pay of the king, the rest [of his accusers] being dead. As it is an affair that has been going on for twelve years nearly, it is difficult to find living witnesses who can testify correctly, being, besides, convinced by the conduct of the *Sieur d'Artaguet*, who did nothing in the matter, and by that of *Duclos*, that the affair had been completely dropped. This cannot be doubted [the dropping of the investigation], in view of the intimacy existing between these two gentlemen [Bienville and *Duclos*]. In truth, one should be of very ill humour to ill treat so good a host, who leaves no stone unturned to make good cheer, not only for his guest, but for all who come to see his guest."

And already Cadillac begins to suspect *Duclos* of being connected in trade with Bienville, although, according to his own showing, such a connection must have been most innocently unprofitable.

Bienville he indorses, however, as skilful in managing the Indians, and he recommends that he be sent to his post, *Natchez*, at once.

The report of *Duclos* to the minister, which antedated his principal's by a few days, was, as might be expected, a brief on the other side. He found, on arrival, not

only the climate of Mobile delightful, but a mine of salt-petre within forty leagues of the fort. He also described the poverty of the colonists ; but gave as a reason their having to change their location so often. Divine service was held in a chamber of a house which the missionaries had purchased ; a church was being built, thanks to the generosity of the *Sieur de Remonville*. The missionaries at the fort were pious ; but it was a pity they did not learn the language of the Indians. The soldiers were persuaded that they had a right to their provisions and pay ; a great many of them demanding their discharge. The writer charged dissipation and extravagance against those who formerly had care of the magazines of merchandise and ammunition. Many of the receipts for provisions furnished had no shape, and the inhabitants did not know how to go about to get them paid.

“The accounts found among the papers of *M. de la Salle* are in so little order that *M. de Bienville*, who, acting commissary, without knowing how, and who was not at all fitted for such business, did not know where to begin to make his accounts to the treasurer of the Marine for the expenditures since 1706.”

Speaking of the debts of *Bienville* and *Chateauguay*, he says that the poverty of both was so great “that they were obliged to take what they needed from the royal stores. As they did not carry on any trade, and were not paid their salaries, they had no other resource in order to live. What is very certain is, they are both very poor.”

In addition to his report, *Duclos* wrote a lengthy memorial, divided into chapters, which does suggest the intimate companionship complained of by *Cadillac*. No

one so well as Bienville could have supplied him with the facts of the condition of the colony as set forth, with the arguments against the cession to Crozat, and with the proofs of its prejudice to the development of the place, and the eventual advantage to the king if Crozat could be brought to renounce his charter. How much of Bienville's good cheer furnished inspiration for the following, Cadillac no doubt also could specify :

"I cannot too highly praise the manner with which M. de Bienville has been able to gain the savages and dominate them. He has succeeded in this by his generosity, his loyalty, his scrupulous exactitude in keeping his word and every promise made, and by the firm and equitable manner with which he renders justice among the different Indian tribes. . . . He has particularly conciliated their esteem by punishing severely any thefts or depredations committed by the French, who are forced to make amends every time they commit an injury against an Indian."

As for the presents to the savages, Duclos without reservation informs the minister that Cadillac turns them to his own profit, and he advises the minister to make the governor, in the distribution of presents, consult with Bienville, who "knows better than any one in the colony the strength of the Indian tribes, and consequently the amount and value of the presents necessary to make them." Recurring to the charges against Iberville and his brothers, Duclos affirms that the richest of all, not excepting one, could not realize a revenue of six hundred livres a year, after having sold all he possessed and paid his debts.

In conclusion, the young commissary, in a manner that refutes the later opinion of the minister concerning

his capacity, pleads for liberty of commerce for the colony, and demonstrates that without it the Sieur de Crozat would gain nothing out of his charter. "As nothing flatters a man so much as liberty, and as they even prefer a liberty that is onerous, to restraints that are advantageous, the mere appearance of being able to trade freely would hold the colonists that are here, and attract others."

CHAPTER XVIII.

1713.

In a private letter¹ to his brother, the Baron of Longueuil, — the only private letter we have from him, — Bienville gives a view of the colony and of himself which makes one all the more dissatisfied with the conventional and uniform representations of both in the official documents : —

LOUISIANA, 2 Oct., 1713.

You will no doubt have learned, sir and very dear brother, that since last year the king has given this country to a Company for fifteen years, and that Monsieur de la Motte Cadillac, governor of it, and interested in it [the company], had come here, with all his family, in a frigate of forty tons. They arrived the 5th of June last; and he has put such consternation in this country that, from the highest to the lowest, all are asking with insistence to go out of it. Several of the inhabitants have already gone to Vera Cruz and Havana ; each one is seeking some way of escape. It is indeed a sad thing, particularly for us officers and soldiers, to whom nothing came from France. My brother Sérigny was not able to ship even a small box by paying the freight. We are obliged to sell our slaves and small furniture, to make a little money to buy flour, shirts, and other cloth-

¹ *Histoire de Longueuil, Iodoin, and Vincent*, p. 119. Letter published first in "*Revue Canadienne*," October, 1881, p. 596.

ing from the store of the Company. They do not wish to receive our salaries [certificates], at half or even two thirds discount; they wish only money, and this autumn we must clothe ourselves. . . . A quarter of flour is sold to us at ninety livres, a hat forty livres, an ell of Rouen linen seven livres; and so on. When we try to say that that is too high, we are answered that they do not force us to buy, that that is the current price among the Spaniards, and that if we can do without, not to take it. But how get elsewhere? There is only this one store. There came also a *commissaire ordonnateur*, with strict orders from the minister to make us pay for all the provisions and other goods we had been obliged to take from the king's store, when resources from France failed, at the highest prices such goods could ever have in this country, so that those of us who calculated that we only owed the king two or three thousand livres, we have to find from eight to ten thousand. It is forbidden also in the future to deliver anything to the officers from the royal stores, not even a pound of powder. In spite of ourselves, we must buy from the Company. Our soldiers are as poor as we; they have not been paid in seven years, and by this vessel [the one that brought La Motte-Cadillac] there only came for them one coat and two shirts [apiece], no stockings, — nothing else. For all provisions, there is only given to them one pound of bad flour; no meat, no vegetables. They are crying, 'Enough!' They often desert, and the prison is full of those who are caught. I will tell you nothing of M. de la Motte, except that we all find it very disagreeable to serve under him. He is completely dazzled at seeing himself the governor of the charming province of Louisiana. If he were not at the head of this Company, he would perhaps assist the officers a little. Upon his arrival, all the *voyageurs* were here, with large supplies of peltry, which he obliged them to sell at vile prices; selling them

in return merchandise exorbitantly high, so that they have all decamped to the Illinois, protesting that they will never again descend here, but in future go to Montreal.

It is only five months since the arrival of the vessel that brought De la Motte, and already all the provisions are at an end. The king has only two barrels of flour left. M. de la Motte has given the soldiers leave to go and live wherever they please among the savages. There is no guard-mounting any longer. I will not expand further on the sad condition in which the colony is ; it has never been so miserable. There is a great deal due by the king for advances made by the inhabitants in times of past need, and nothing has been paid yet. M. de la Motte has a grown daughter who has a great deal of merit. I would think of asking her in marriage, if I had received your consent and that of my very dear sister, although I should have a great deal of trouble to make up my mind to become the son-in-law of M. de la Motte, on account of all the snarls I see him in with everybody. He is the most artificial man in the world, who never says aught but the contrary of what he thinks.

I gave myself already, a year ago, the pleasure of writing to you on the subject of this future marriage, to know your thought. I had not at that time seen the young lady. I have not touched with her upon the subject of the marriage, and will not do so until I hear your will on the subject. I have never had a father; it is you who served me for one. I think that you will kindly continue your good offices to me in regard to the twelve thousand livres which you kindly withdrew from the sale of "Près-de-ville" and the city house, and we beg you, Chateauguay and I, to have it held for us in France. Chateauguay informs you what he owes to Madame de Bethune (the widow of Ibergville, remarried to the Comte de Bethune), and begs you to send it to her. As for me, I owe nothing to anybody.

M. de Sérigny, who told you that I was in debt to him, is mistaken; he has never loaned me a sol since I can remember myself as reasonable: it is he who owes me a thousand pieces, which I sent him six years ago. On the seven thousand livres, or thereabouts, that you may have for me, I beg you to remit seven hundred livres in French money to the heirs of a certain Duchéry who died here five years ago; his father was named Denis Darbois; the baptismal name of this one also is Denis. I have here three money orders belonging to him: one for 360 livres, for his pay for one year; another for 180 livres, for clothes sold several Canadians in the service of the king, who could only pay in money orders; and also another for 160 livres, for some other transactions which I assumed for this Duchéry. His father, I believe, belongs to "Cap Rouge,"—three leagues from Quebec. I wrote to his parents, who have made no reply. It should be the same to them to receive from you cards [card-money], which is the money of Canada, as these money orders, which I do not think will be paid until the king pays his cards. . . .

I have heard here casually (*en batons rompus*) that the heirs of the late Chevalier de Bécancourt [one of the first commissaries in the colony] had not been paid by the late M. d'Iberville the eight hundred livres which the auction of his possessions amounted to,—which astonishes me, having written at the time to M. d'Iberville that I had received this sum of eight hundred livres and [for him] to give them to the heirs. I sent him the inventory which I had signed by the officers in duplicate. He acknowledged to me the reception of it, telling me that he had found at Paris the eldest of the Messieurs de Bécancourt, to whom he had loaned money, more even than that sum covered. I cannot learn from the accounts Madame de Bethune sends me if she is carrying the eight hundred livres for me, as nothing is sent me in detail, only the totals. The clerks she has, not being the

same as before, during the lifetime of her husband, I cannot exactly find out if I owe that amount. I have still the letter, in which my late brother informs me that he has accounts with the eldest of the Messieurs de Bécancourt, and that he is satisfied; but in the uncertainty I think I should, in conscience, pray you to see these gentlemen, the heirs of the said Chevalier de Bécancourt, and to pay them the sum of eight hundred livres, after taking their oath that they have never received the above amount, particularly the eldest of the family. If you have to pay this amount, there will not remain more than 4,500 of the 6,000 livres; you will have them sent for me in France in the manner you think most proper, either in employing cards, peltry, or sending them in bills of exchange, the whole addressed to my brother De Sérigny. You will know better than I the manner which will be most advantageous for me, on account of the risks, which are at present small, having peace with England. I approve and will hold well done whatever you do in the matter.

While I am writing, Madame Le Sueur has come in; she assures me of having heard it said by one Babin, called Lasource, who came here by land five years ago, that the heirs of the Sieur de Bécancourt had obliged him, Babin, who was in debt to the late M. d'Iberville, to pay them, — which debt he was condemned to pay, and did pay. As this Babin, or Lasource, is not here at present, — he lives ten leagues from here, — I cannot know exactly how much he paid on the account of M. d'Iberville. Madame Le Sueur says she thinks it was to Madame de Sourdis (De Villebon) that the said Lasource gave 400 to 700 livres. You will have the kindness to inform yourself about it, and to pay nothing until I have heard from this Babin that he has paid, on the account of M. d'Iberville, the amount of the Bécancourt heritage. As the rest of the voyagers who intend going into your part of the country leave shortly, I

will enlighten you better about it. In regard to what you tell me, — Saint-Hélène is to take on the twelve thousand livres, — I shall keep account; he owes me considerable. He has a very poor head, and spends a great deal: one can trust him with nothing, he dissipates a great deal. I have kept him here by me, and have given him the command of the little brigantines which the king keeps in the country; he has 600 livres a year and his valet. The commissary is one of my intimates; we live together. I got him to write to the minister very advantageously about Saint-Hélène; he continues the same pay that I had given him. The last voyage that I sent Saint-Hélène on to Vera Cruz, he spent more than 5,000 livres in nine months' time. When I asked him to account for it, the only reason he could give me was that he had bought six very fine horses very dear, which had died, and the rest was not his fault; that his pilot had solicited him to feast the other pilots and ship-captains in port; and, in short, several similar reasons. I confess to you, a very little more, and I would have sent him back to my brother Sérigny, who sent him to me. He will ruin me if he continues. He drinks and smokes a great deal; he is assuredly the only one of the family who does so. He does not stick to anything; he has just, however, promised me that he will be more orderly in the future. He is leaving for Havana to get Indian corn for the garrison, which is reduced to running the woods for a living.

I have strong expectations that this company will not be able to hold out in this country, and that it will abandon it, whatever good hopes M. de la Motte gives M. Crozat and Le Bar, who have an interest in it [the Company]. Their one object is to open a great commerce with Spain; but they will certainly not accomplish anything. The Spaniards are warned, and they thrust their hands in everywhere, searching even into the sheathing of the ships which go there for provisions. A vessel is just at this moment

arriving from Vera Cruz, which they [the Company] sent under pretext of asking help. It was sent back, in sight of land, without a hearing.

I am very sensible of the expressions of friendship that you give me in your letters, and also of [those of] my very dear sister, who had the goodness to think of me. I have received two of her letters, which gave me real pleasure. I pray her to continue to write to me, it is the only consolation I have in this country, to hear from you and her. I tremble every time I hear that there is some great sickness in Canada. As you are both beginning to enter into years, the risk is greater.

You will kindly permit me to embrace here M. de Longueuil [eldest son of the baron], who, I am assured, has returned to Canada a lieutenant; you must be thinking of soon making a captain of him. Suffer me to embrace here Madame de Varennes, my very dear niece; I am much pleased that you inform me she is happy with M. de Varennes: I had heard quite differently, which troubled me much. She is an amiable girl, with all the merit in the world, according to the portrait I have heard made of her. My dear cousin De Senneville, be sure to give him my compliments; I despair of ever hearing from him, after having written to him (without an answer) as often as I did when I first came here. I know he is very negligent about writing, which takes from me all thought that he is acting from indifference.

I am writing to M. de la Chassague, begging him to reproach my sister with her neglect; she has never yet written to me a single line in her life, — at which I am very much mortified, loving her as tenderly as I do, and I threaten her in the letter I am writing, to force her henceforth to write to me, by the importunities I threaten to write to her.

Chateauguay is writing to you very lengthily. He will, no doubt, touch upon the worry M. de la Motte is causing

him. He has taken possession of his house, despite him and whatever resistance he could make, as it was a large, new two-storied house, and good to lodge his [Cadillac's] whole family, which is numerous.

As I expect to go to France next year, I pray you, my very dear sister, to recommend to your patron to aid me in obtaining what I might find to suit me. It is a favour I ask of you, and also that of believing me, with much respect, sir and very dear brother,


Your very humble and very obedient servant,

BIENVILLE.

I forgot to tell you that I think the minister completely recovered from his attitude against me. The curate-priest, my enemy, has been recalled; another has come in his place, who often eats of my soup. The minister gives me plenty of the holy water of the court. In the last letters he writes me promising that on the first opportunity I might be advanced. I almost flatter myself that if this company should fail, M. de la Motte might be recalled, and I remain again commandant. It is only in case that this should happen that I ask your consent to marry Mlle. de la Motte; for without that I do not see ahead how I could provide for a wife or provide for myself, for our governor is very stingy. He has not yet offered us a glass of water since the five months he has been here. The officers are always at my house. As heretofore, in regard to the money I had in my hands belonging to the heirs of Poitier, here inclosed, I have remitted it all into the hands of the Sieur Charly, upon the procuration of his father, De Poitier. I am very much mortified because M. Pacaud writes me that Poitier owes him; but it was too late, it was already delivered.

While Bienville was thus seemingly occupied renewing his family relations, arranging his financial affairs, in-

dulging in matrimonial speculations, preparing either for retreat to France or replacement to his old command in case of Cadillac's happy failure, the latter was wrestling with the swarming difficulties of his government. As he truthfully said, a similar one existed nowhere in the world. His pen alone can do justice to it. In order to reap a new harvest of presents, feasting, and pacifications out of the new administration, the natives were breaking out into complications in every quarter. No market could be found for Crozat's merchandise, either openly or surreptitiously, by land or by water, in any of the Spanish possessions. The king, as usual, defaulting from his share of the charter, was sending neither pay, clothes, nor provisions for the soldiers, who were mutinous and deserting. The girls sent out to marry were worthless characters. Even the Creator was *particeps criminis* in the disorder and distress, for having created such a country, the vilest of the vile for infertility, insalubrity, and influences for general moral depravation. It was not worth wasting money on, and could be of no utility to France, except for commercial depredations upon the Spaniards in time of peace, and armed ones in time of war. But of all the difficulties of his position, Bienville and Duclos were the most exasperating, and, indeed, in the governor's point of view, most responsible for all the rest. They had formed a cabal among the officers, which, waxing in violence and impertinence, met in the house of the commissary for the purpose of drinking, debauchery, and formation of schemes against the governor. Without regard apparently for any prospects of tender family relations, he had had Bienville arrested for giving him the lie twice consecutively. He took the



disciplining of the soldiers in hand himself, and put one in irons, — a mutineer who came to demand food from him. He particularly prided himself upon his treatment of the colonists, who had assembled themselves without his permission and drawn up a petition asking that M. Crozat would sell only by wholesale, and only at fifty per cent profit on the price in France. Cadillac says that the petition contained several other demands equally absurd, but that news of it coming to him, he proclaimed loudly that he would hang any bearer of it as the leader of rebellion ; and this threat coming to the ears of Bienville and Duclos, they suppressed it.

Crozat came to the protection of his interest by raining down upon the colony ordinances against trade in any shape or form, even to the small marketing provisionment of Pensacola, under penalty of confiscation to the benefit of Crozat. It was also forbidden for any one in the colony to possess a vessel proper for sea travel, or for any one, not of the colony, to send any vessel into it for the purpose of trade. As much as possible all expenses were paid in the merchandise which accumulated to rot in the warehouses, and prices were strained to cover, not only all legitimate profit, extortionate as it was, but also the loss from disappointment of the Spanish trade.

Cadillac was not less ingenious in coming to the rescue of his authority, put in derision by the cabal of godless young officers. He emitted an ordinance which forbade the wearing of swords or other arms by any one not proving his title of nobility to the clerk of the council, under pain of three hundred livres fine and one month's imprisonment, with increased punishment in

case of a repetition of the offence. And in every letter the minister was importuned to interfere, or to authorize the governor to proceed with such drastic remedies as his skill and experience suggested, not only in civil and military matters, but in ecclesiastical.


CHAPTER XIX.

1715, 1716.

THE Indians soon recognized the grip of a familiar hand upon them, rousing them from their comfortable and profitable double-dealing. English traders had crept in among the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Yazous, and Natchez, and English emissaries were busy among the tribes still nearer the French. An English officer from Carolina, travelling in friendly security down the Mississippi, was arrested at Manchac by a pirogue of Canadians sent for the purpose, and brought to Mobile. Although Bienville set him at liberty and passed him on to Pensacola, it is related, rather grimly, that he was killed by a Tohomes Indian on his way back to Carolina. Already Indian chiefs were accepting English invitations to visit their settlement in Carolina. Bienville sent for the principal of the Choctaw chiefs, who only came, says the "*Journal Historique*," upon the assurance of Cadillac's absence. They were treated to such denunciations of their broken faith, such reproaches for their disloyalty, and of what they were to expect in the way of profit and friendship from the French, that they promised all that was required of them, and went away primed to acquit it. And in a short time they, in fact, returned with three English male prisoners, whom they had pillaged. Other tribes, envious of their booty or

their loyalty, followed their example. In less than a month, a general pillaging of English merchandise had scattered the English traders. Those who were brought prisoners to Mobile were sent on a voyage to Vera Cruz. De Sainte-Hélène lost his not very valuable life in a Chickasaw village where a massacre of the traders preceded their pillaging. Following the advice of a chief to keep out of the way, he remained in his cabin; but while he was bending over to get a light for his pipe, two young savages, mistaking him for an Englishman, slipped up behind him and killed him. Renewed alliances with the French naturally followed this outbreak against their rivals, — alliances which Bienville forced to include, not only intertribal peace, but punishment of the disloyal; the Choctaw chiefs pushing their regenerated allegiance so far as to bring to him, according to his demand, the heads of those of the tribe who had been led by partisanship of the English into visiting Carolina, who, Bienville convinced them, were the causes of all their delinquencies.

In the month of October, Cadillac returned from the Illinois. His letters to the minister during his mining experiment keep up a brave show of hope and conviction; but his voyage, as he had found out, was a wild-goose chase. The specimens of ore had not been found near Kaskaskia, but had been given to the Canadians there by some *coureurs de bois*, who had obtained them from some Spaniards. The governor returned therefore to his capital more determined and better fitted than ever by temper to carry out his ideal of authority. The greatest obstacle to it in his opinion was shortly to be removed.



Bienville received orders from France to proceed with a force of eighty men to his post at the Natchez, make an establishment, and take up his residence there. Pirogues were being constructed, and other preparations made for the expedition, when news was received in January, 1716, which changed the character of the enterprise, and indeed, eventually, the character of the French occupation of the Mississippi. The Natchez were in war, they had pillaged Crozat's storehouse, killed all the commissioners they could find, and were putting to death all the Frenchmen caught travelling up and down the river. Nothing could be more disastrous to the colony; there was no nation so important to the success of it as the Natchez, none whom it was so necessary to keep on good terms with, and none, now that they were in revolt, whom it was so vital to subjugate promptly and in an impressive and satisfactory manner. Bienville hastened his departure in every possible manner. Unfortunately there is no account from him of the first Natchez war, as it is called, nor from Cadillac. The Relations from the two participants in it, Richebourg and Pennicaut, leave nothing to be desired in detail and manner; but the former, as Cadillac's clique explain, belonged to Bienville's cabal, and the latter was ever his fervent admirer. Both substantially agree. But however related and by whom, the affair is interesting in the light it throws upon Bienville's character, upon the character of the Natchez, and the description of the unique duel which took place between the representatives of a barbarized civilization and a civilized barbarity.

Duclos, who forwards Richebourg's memoir to the

minister, repeats the former's account of Cadillac's impolitic conduct in refusing or slighting the calumet of the Natchez both in going up the river to the Illinois, and returning. The Natchez, suspiciously concluding from this that some stroke was intended against them, simply took the initiative, as they imagined. Richebourg expressed this, in his opinion, as the cause of the war, frankly to Cadillac, who agreed, says Duclos, in its probable correctness. Cadillac's reasons to the minister for the war were quite otherwise. He wrote that after the accidental burning of the Natchez temple, by flames carried from the cabin of Crozat's agent, four Frenchmen travelling up to the Illinois were killed, according to Indian custom, which demands a human sacrifice for the burning of a temple, when the chief does not throw himself into the flames. Bienville's comment upon this is that the Frenchmen were killed four weeks after the extinction of the fire, and that during the burning of the temple there were Frenchmen among the Natchez to whom no harm was done. Richebourg writes that after the news arrived in Mobile, when Bienville was making all haste to depart, he solicited Cadillac to detail the force of eighty men, ordered by Pontchartrain. Cadillac refused to do more than give him the company of Richebourg, which consisted only of thirty-four men. Bienville then got Duclos and the agents of Crozat to join him in representing to Cadillac the impossibility of constructing a fort and carrying on a war with the Natchez, who numbered at least eight hundred men, with a force of thirty-four. The result was an addition of fifteen sailors. With these he started, in eight pirogues. He

arrived at the Tunicas, eighteen leagues below the Natchez, on the 23d of April. There he learned that the Natchez had assassinated another Frenchman coming down the river from the Illinois, and were lying in wait at the same place for fifteen more who were expected. Davion, the missionary at the Tunicas, advised Bienville of the fact that the Natchez were still ignorant that the French knew of their misdeeds, the assassinations being kept a profound secret among them. He warned him also against the Tunicas, who had received presents to kill him. Concealing his anxiety at this last information, and his knowledge of the state of affairs among the Natchez, Bienville assembled the Tunica warriors, and gave out to them that his mission was to make a small establishment among the Natchez, where that nation and others could trade their peltry for merchandise ; but as his men were very fatigued with the voyage, and there was some sickness among them, he was going to camp on an island a third of a league below their village, to rest for some time, and that they would do him a favour by sending some of their tribe to announce his arrival to the Natchez, which was done at once ; and Bienville, after smoking the calumet of the Tunicas, and making them smoke his, proceeded to the island, where he immediately went to work putting up a little intrenchment of pieux and the necessary lodgments for his troops. On the 27th, three Natchez arrived, sent by their chief to present the calumet to Bienville. He waved it aside, saying that they could get some of his soldiers to smoke it, but that for himself, being a great chief of the French, he would only smoke a calumet

presented by a sun chief. This somewhat disconcerted the warriors. However, Bienville, having given them something to eat, affected great gayety with them, asked the news of their chiefs, expressed great desire to see them, and his astonishment that they had not already come to bring him refreshments, that apparently the Natchez did not care about the French making an establishment with them, and that if it was so, he would make it at the Tunicas. The warriors replied, with evident satisfaction, that their nation desired nothing better than to have an establishment of the French on their territory, and that they were convinced that in five or six days the chiefs of the nation, without fail, would come themselves to express their joy at it. The next day the three warriors returned. Bienville sent with them a young Frenchman who spoke their language perfectly, to whom he had explained everything to say to the chiefs, and all the answers necessary to induce them to come to the island. The same day he sent one of his bravest and most adroit Canadians in a pirogue with an Illinois to slip by the Natchez during the night and hasten up the river to warn the fifteen men coming down from the Illinois. He gave him also, to place in the different points of the river, a dozen large sheets of parchment, on which was written in large characters: "The Natchez have declared war against the French, and M. de Bienville is camped at the Tunicas."

In about a week six Canadian trappers arrived at the island camp in three pirogues loaded with peltry, smoked beef, and bear's oil. They related that, unaware of the hostilities of the Natchez, they had landed

there ; but hardly had their feet touched land when some twenty men jumped upon them, disarmed them, and carried off everything they had in their pirogues. They were conducted to the village of the chief named The Bearded, — a great warrior. He asked them immediately how many more Frenchmen were coming down after them ; they answered, ingenuously, that they had left twelve more in six pirogues, who were still hunting, but who would not be long behind them. A short while afterwards, some of the great chiefs of the Natchez came in a great temper to take The Bearded to task for having pillaged and disarmed the Canadians. Their arms were at once returned to them, and the restoration of their property promised. They were given food, and shut up in a cabin to themselves, where they remained three days, during which the chiefs and warriors deliberated night and day what they should do with them. The fourth day the chiefs came for them, and conducted them to their pirogues, in which they found almost everything that had been taken from them. There, the chiefs told them that Bienville was at the Tunicas, resting, that shortly he expected to come to the Natchez to make an establishment, and that they intended sending him provisions in a few days.

On the 8th of May, at ten o'clock in the morning, there were seen approaching the island four pirogues, in each of which were four men erect, chanting the calumet, and three sitting under parasols, with twelve swimmers round about. It was the Natchez chiefs, coming to fall into the trap prepared for them. Bienville's interpreter accompanied them, and another Frenchman.

Bienville, an adept in savage ceremonies and customs,

ordered one half of his men not to show themselves, but to remain under arms, at hand in their barracks. The other half were to remain unarmed around his tent, and when the boats landed, were to take their arms, one by one, as the savages stepped ashore ; and he charged them only to let the eight chiefs he named (knowing all the warriors by name) enter his tent ; the rest were to remain seated at the door, — all of which was executed, as he said. The eight chiefs entered singing, holding their calumet, which they passed several times over Bienville, from his head to his feet, in sign of union, passing their hands over his stomach, then over theirs ; after which they presented him their calumet to smoke. He pushed the calumet aside with contempt, and said he wished to hear their speeches and know their thoughts before he smoked with them. This disconcerted the chiefs, who went out of the tent and presented their calumets to the sun. One of them, the great priest of the temple, fixing his looks on the sun, raising his arms over his head, invoked it in prayer. Then they re-entered the tent, and again presented their calumets. Bienville, as if bored by their ceremonies, said to them that they had to tell him what satisfaction they were going to give him for the five Frenchmen whom they had assassinated. This stunned them ; they hung their heads without answering. At which Bienville made a sign to have them seized and conducted to the prison he had prepared for them. They were put in irons. In the evening, bread and meat were presented to them. They refused to eat. All sang their death-song. At nightfall, Bienville had brought to his tent the great chief of the nation, called the Great


Sun, his brother, Stung Serpent, and a second brother, surnamed the Little Sun. As they seemed half dead already, Bienville, to reassure them, commenced by promising them not to put them to death. He told them he knew it was not by their orders that the five Frenchmen had been assassinated ; that for his satisfaction, he wished not only the heads of the murderers brought to him, but the heads of the chiefs who had given the order ; that the scalps would not content him, that he wished their heads, so as to recognize them by their tattooed marks ; that he gave them that night to consult among themselves as to the measures they had to take to accord him a prompt satisfaction, otherwise he might take a stand bad for their nation. He added that they were not ignorant of the credit he had among all his savage allies ; that it would be easy to declare war against them and to destroy all their eight villages, without risking the life of a single Frenchman ; that they must remember that in 1704, when the Schioumachaqui (Clierthimachas) assassinated a missionary and three Frenchmen, upon their refusal to deliver up the murderers, all of his allied nations had been set upon them, so that from four hundred families they were reduced, in less than two years, to ninety. He then cited to them an example which he had made in 1707, when, as he reminded them, he had condemned a Frenchman to death for killing two Pascagoula Indians. In 1703, the Coiras chiefs had made no difficulty about putting to death five of their warriors who had killed a missionary and two other Frenchmen ; and that, in that same year, he had forced the chief of the Touachas to put to death two of their men who had assassinated a Chicka-

saw ; and in 1715, the Choctaws had furnished him the same satisfaction ; the Mobilians, in 1707, had brought him the head of one of their tribe who had killed a Tou-acha, and that in 1709 the Pascagoulas, having killed a Mobilian, he had forced them to render satisfaction to the injured parties.

This speech, the truth of which they could not contest, and which they do not seem to have doubted, made a great impression on the Natchez chiefs. They listened with great attention, and made no attempt to answer. Visibly, however, they seemed to suffer most acutely from the humiliation of being put in irons, like their vassals.

The next morning, at daylight, the three brother chiefs asked to speak to Bienville. They were brought into his presence. They prayed his attention to the fact that there was no one in the village of sufficient authority to put the men, whose heads he demanded, to death ; that if he would permit it, the chief, the Serpent, as the head of the nation, would go and accomplish the dangerous mission. This Bienville refused, putting in the place of the Serpent his younger brother, the Little Sun, whom he embarked immediately in a pirogue armed with twelve soldiers and an officer. He was landed two leagues below his village, whither he made his way by land.

The next day two Canadians arrived from the upper river in safety, having seen and profited by the parchment advertisements ; and two days later, the Canadian and Iroquois returned from their mission with eleven Frenchmen whom they had met seven leagues above the Natchez, and saved from the ambush prepared for



them. The reinforcement was all the more welcome, as it included seven pirogues loaded with meat and meal, which were beginning to run low on the river island. They reported that a pirogue, with one Canadian and two Illinois, who had separated from the party, had been taken by the Natchez.

Five days after the Little Sun departed, he returned, fetching with him three heads, of which (with the aid of Pennicaut) only two were identified as belonging to the criminals concerned in the assassination. Bienville summoned the chiefs to his presence, and causing the rejected head to be thrown at their feet, remarked that in endeavouring to impose upon him they had sacrificed an innocent man. The chiefs confessed that the head was that of a warrior who had taken no part in the killing of the Frenchmen, but that being the brother of one of the murderers who had escaped, they had put him to death in his place. Bienville, showing his displeasure at the incomplete punishment and insufficient number of heads, told them that they would have to send, on the morrow, another warrior, another chief, to their village, to obtain what he demanded. The Little Sun was put in irons and imprisoned like the others. He had brought with him, in a vain attempt at propitiation, the last prisoners of the Natchez, — the Canadian and two Illinois Indians whom he had delivered from the stake, where they were bound, to be burned.

The next day, two warriors and the great priest of the temple were sent under a guard to the Natchez village. They were confident of fetching back the head of the chief White-Earth, the leader of the movement against the French. The same day Davion sent a

warning to Bienville from the Tunicas that the Natchez were arming to rescue their chiefs or perish with them. The Tunicas offered forty of their bravest warriors for the emergency ; but Bienville, suspicious of all the natives, assured them that he was not at all afraid, but that they would do him a favour by continuing to send their spies among the Natchez, and keeping him informed of their movements.

The high water of the Mississippi began to encroach upon the island. It rose until even the highest part was overflowed a half foot deep. The weather was excessively hot. Fevers broke out, and the men suffered severely from colics and pains in their limbs from living constantly in the wet. Bienville had to abandon his tent and take to a scaffolding. An elevated powder magazine had also to be constructed.

The chief, Serpent, caught the fever. Bienville had his irons removed, and permitted him and his brothers to pass the days with him in his lodgings. During their contracted companionship there was abundant time and opportunity for the Canadian to exercise to the utmost his inflexible influence over savage minds. His threats, reproaches, and exhortations drew tears and sighs from his unfortunate prisoners. They agreed as to the treason and culpability of their nation, persisting in their assurances, however, which they said the Frenchmen in Natchez could prove, that they personally had never taken part in any of the councils held to invite the English to come there ; and as for the killing of the Frenchmen, they had only heard of it eight days afterwards, and that they then regretted and wept over it, weeping as they spoke. Bienville pressing



them to further confidence, they related everything as it had happened, confessing that the three warrior chiefs of Chestnut, White Earth, and Grigas villages were the causers of all the trouble, that it was they who had invited the English to their villages, and it was they who had ordered the massacre of the Frenchmen. Two of them were at that moment in the French prison, their foster-brother, The Bearded, and Alaho Plechia ; but the third, White Earth, had not come with them. They said that for a year these chiefs had acquired such power over the nation that they were more feared and obeyed than even they, the heads of the nation. The Serpent added that there were two other men in the prison who had taken part in the killing, and that he knew of none others besides.

Bienville then, for his part, confessing that he had always had his doubts about their being involved in the affair, informed them that they should no longer be treated as prisoners. He had their beds made in his quarters, where they henceforth slept.

On the 25th of May, ten days after their departure, the deputation sent for the head of White Earth returned without it. He, they said, had taken flight ; but they restored several of the slaves taken from the massacred Frenchmen, and much of their property.

The sickness that increased among his men daily, and no doubt the conviction that he had reached the limit of his power over the Natchez, forced Bienville to put an end to his war of negotiation. On the 1st of June he ordered all the Natchez in the prison, where they had been confined for a month, with the exception of the four certified criminals, to be brought before him ; and

in the presence of their three chiefs he declared his conditions of peace to them: that they should give their word to kill White Earth so soon as they could catch up with him, and deliver his head to the French officer stationed at Natchez; that they should consent, without delay, to the putting to death of the two chiefs and two warriors then in prison and in irons, as reparation for their killing the Frenchmen; that they should restore all that they had stolen, and force their men to pay for the value of what had been lost, in skins and provisions; that they should pledge their nation to cut two thousand five hundred pieux, thirteen feet and ten inches long, of Acacia wood, and transport them to make a fort on the spot on the banks of the Mississippi which would be designated to them; and that besides, they should engage to furnish bark from three thousand cypress-trees to cover the buildings in the fort with, and that before the end of July.

Whatever the conditions to the Indians, under the circumstances, there was no alternative but to accept them. The chiefs did it with a grace that in days past would have been called royal. They thanked Bienville, each one making an harangue, in which they no doubt expressed all the regret for the past, and some of the protestations for the future, with, perhaps, a modicum of the devotion to and admiration of the French attributed to them by Richebourg. They all repeated the articles and conditions of the proposed peace, binding themselves not only to execute them faithfully, but to perform even more than was required.


After their speeches the chiefs asked Bienville if he would permit them again to offer their calumet. He

replied that it was not yet time for that, they must first return to their villages, assemble their warriors, and explain the conditions upon which he accorded peace to them, and that he would send an officer and two soldiers with them to see that they did it.

The four guilty ones, in the prison, not doubting of the fate reserved for them, recommenced their death-chants. The Serpent, fearing the commotion in their villages when the returning Indians brought the news of the proposed execution of such famous warriors, prayed Bienville to give out that they were merely to be taken down to the colony, to the governor, who would decide upon them. He himself visited them in prison to tranquillize them, assuring them that they were not to be put to death.

Two days afterwards all the Natchez, with the exception of the Serpent and the Little Sun, kept as hostages, were restored to their villages. The aide-major, Pailloux, and two soldiers accompanied them, under instructions from Bienville to remain with one soldier at the principal village in case the nation accepted the terms, sending one soldier and a chief to the island to render an account of it. He was also to search for the most suitable site near the river for a fort.

On the 7th of June the pirogue bore back to the island nine old men of the Natchez and the soldier, bearing Pailloux' written account of what had taken place, the great joy of the natives at having their chiefs restored to them, and their disposition to do all that was demanded of them. Pailloux also had found a most advantageous position for a fort, near the river. The nine patriarchs presented their calumet, which Bien-



ville accepted, and smoked with great ceremony. He then presented his, which was likewise accepted and smoked. The next day the old men returned. The Little Sun was allowed to go with them, but the Serpent was still retained as a hostage. A pirogue at the same time took to Pailloux the axes, spades, pickaxes, and other instruments necessary for building the fort. On the following day the two imprisoned braves had their heads broken by the soldiers. De Richebourg, one of the sufferers from illness, was permitted to return to Mobile. His report to the governor was anything but approved of. Cadillac pronounced Bienville's conduct as against the rights of humanity, and execrable. The force and influence of this judgment, however just, was nullified in the small community by a recent stroke of Cadillac's own against the Indians, of one of which he even boasted to Pontchartrain : having induced a Choctaw chief to assassinate his brother, by promising him the murdered man's position. And as Duclos pertinently remarked, in quoting the governor's dictum to the minister, Cadillac would have blamed Bienville, no matter what the latter had done.

The day after De Richebourg left, Bienville delivered himself of his two remaining Natchez prisoners, by giving them in charge to a party of Canadian traders, who were resuming their journey with their peltry to the mouth of the river. Their orders were to knock the chiefs on the head when they were about ten or twelve leagues from the island. As they were taking them to the boats to embark them, The Bearded interrupted his death-chant to sing his war-song. He related his wonderful deeds against different nations, and the number

of scalps he had raised. He called out the five Frenchmen whom he had had killed, and said he died with regret at not having killed more. The Serpent, who stood looking on and listening attentively, could not conceal his disgust at such, to him, unintelligent conduct ; turning to Bienville, he said, "He is my brother, but I do not regret him ; you are ridding us of a bad man."

As the Mississippi did not fall, and the island still remained several inches under water, Bienville was forced to send his sick men and convalescents to the high lands of the Tunicas, where the Indians cared for them assiduously, and kept them supplied with fresh beef and venison.

A party of Natchitoches arriving at the Tunicas with a pirogue-load of salt to sell, Bienville heard from them of the movement of a large party of Spaniards from Mexico towards Red River, with the purpose of making an establishment there. He hurried off immediately a sergeant with six soldiers to the head of Red River to forestall them by at least an official proprietorship.

On the 22d of July, De Pailloux reported the fort in a tenable condition. Bienville, making a levy of thirty rowers upon the Tunicas, abandoned his amphibious quarters, and with what remained of his force, proceeded up the river. He had not ten well soldiers in his company. The Serpent, who was still with them, summoned to the landing-place a hundred and fifty of his men, who transferred the baggage from the boats to the fort on the same day that they arrived there.

The Indians were still furnishing their contributions of timber and cypress-bark. In the course of the month the fortifications and buildings were completed,

and the flag of France floated over a conquered country and a subdued nation. Like the Tunicas, the surrounding tribes were quick to reaffirm themselves with the successful party, and claim alliance with such accomplished foes. The Yazous and Ossagoulas came with their calumet to Bienville, who received them with his and their punctilious etiquette, and the same day the whole strength of the Natchez villages turned out to dance and sing, and rejoice before the rude but grim walls of that tyrant, military force, which they had raised against themselves.

At the end of August such peace and tranquillity reigned over the so-recently convulsed community that Bienville felt justified in handing his command over to De Pailloux, while he went upon the not very pleasant mission of making to his superior officer the official report of the termination of his campaign, — perhaps of its justification ; for it is safe to presume that he had not been left in ignorance of Cadillac's opinion of it. His mind in going down the river must have been as busily occupied with plans for compassing the Gascon as it had been with schemes against the Natchez in going up. But in this event it was lost thought-work.

When he reached Mobile on the 4th of October, a communication from the Minister of Marine was handed him. It contained an order for him to take command until the arrival of De l'Épinay, named to succeed M. de la Motte Cadillac.

The Gascon had sinned against Talleyrand's dictum. In one of his letters to the Government, he says : " I think that so much care, so much trouble, should certainly merit the words of the Scripture, ' Well done,

good and faithful servant,' etc. . . . but just the opposite comes to me ; the more I do, and the better I do it, the more I am ill-treated and scolded, — which discourages me completely. Sometimes the desire seizes me to do badly, according to the example of those around me, to see if I should not succeed better." No time was granted him to put the latter policy in practice ; and whatever his deserts or his idea of them, and his merit of the Scriptural encomium, he received from Crozat but the paltry recognition expressed in writing to the minister, "I am of the opinion that all the disorders of which M. de la Motte complains come from the bad administration of M. de la Motte Cadillac himself."


Pontchartrain's tribute was as follows : "Messieurs de la Motte Cadillac and Duclos, who have characters incompatible, without having the intelligence necessary for their functions, are hereby dismissed and replaced."

CHAPTER XX.

1717, 1718.

BIENVILLE's disappointment at not succeeding Cadillac was great. In the hearts of his companions, friends, followers, it became resentment, which did not bode well for the new administration. There was but a short time granted in which to enjoy their old independence and authority ; they had hardly begun to exercise it before it terminated. In the beginning of March, 1717, two war-vessels escorted into the harbour "*La Paix*," which, with the new officials, fifty emigrants and three companies of infantry, brought the usual modicum of ministerial instructions and reprehensions, with one slight variation in the way of recognition. Bienville received the Cross of St. Louis, and the concession of Horn Island,—in soccage, however, not in fief, as he had asked.

The ships were witnesses of the revolution in nature predicted as possible by Iberville twenty years before. A wind-storm, driving the sand up the channel, formed the bar which has since condemned it. The ships seeking egress, where they had entered over a depth of twenty feet, met a closed passage before them completely blocked in. They had to be unloaded, and carried around through the channel of Grand Gorier Island.



De l'Épinay was an old lieutenant of marine who had seen considerable service in Canada. Crozat, with more confidence in his enterprise than in men, not only gave him, as he had done Cadillac, an interest in the profits of the charter, but agreed to pay him two thousand livres a year if, in his position as governor, he would strictly and severely execute the royal ordinance protecting the monopoly of trade.

The minister, in a vain attempt to profit by experience, condescends to be minutely particular in his careful limitations to the authority of governor and royal commissary, and to be minutely solicitous in his efforts to predispose harmonious relations between them ; " his Majesty wishing, in case of any difficulty not foreseen, that they should explain themselves one to another, in mildness and amity, and always with a view to their service and to the public good." But the danger provided for is never that which comes to pass. The instructions based on what was done and finished were, as usual, lamentably deficient as a guide in the future.


De l'Épinay and Hubert, his commissioner, either from natural temperament or the effect of administrative instructions, broke the precedent set by past governors and commissioners by fulfilling their official functions in harmony. The discord came from the band of men, the discoverers of the country, — its developers, defenders, its *holders* for the past twenty years, who resented the ministerial belittling of them, the hampering of their conduct, their subordination to non-competent aliens. The growing coterie of rival French officers excited their jealousy, their distrust ; and the Canadians resembled too nearly their savage friends to

submit to what they could resist, and forgive where they could resent.

The contest broke out sharply. The government was administered with all preciseness, owing perhaps to the very enmity which divided the officials into two camps. Bienville naturally found De l'Épinay arbitrary and venal. As for his method of governing the Indians, he wrote to Hubert he could understand nothing about it. He wrote to the minister that De l'Épinay had seized all jurisdiction, civil and criminal, publishing ordinances of police, giving his orders to the treasurer, withholding for himself the presents intended by the Government for the Indians, carrying on trade for himself, but putting in irons any one who imitated his example, and — always a telling accusation to the court of Louis XIV. and the Regent — led a scandalous life. He had promulgated an ordinance against the selling of brandy to the Indians, than which nothing could have made him more unpopular with his compatriots, as brandy was not only their most lucrative article of commerce, but their most effective means of assuring themselves of the affections of the natives.

Hubert, who was the active organ of the administration, couched his resentment in a broad, but safely damnatory statement, which could not be met with either proof or denial: he charged that Bienville was pensioned by the Spanish Government. It was an accusation for which Bienville never forgave him, and which he never personally or officially omitted an opportunity to revenge.

The administration, such as it was, was of short duration. Crozat, suffering from the fulfilment of the pre-



diction of the knowing ones at the beginning of his charter, terminated his experiment of instituting a vast lucrative commerce where there was possibility for only trade. His prayer to be relieved of his magnificent privilege and bad bargain was granted, and Louisiana and the Mississippi, wholesale and retail, with the one spiritual exception of souls, which still were a monopoly of the Bishop of Quebec, was thrown into a parcel with the peltry trade of Canada (whose charter opportunely expired at the time), and given over for twenty-five years to a Company called the Western. The king, in virtue of his authority to name the directors, gave the presidency of it to John Law. Among the directors was D'Artaguet, now receiver-general of finances of Auch.

The charter of the Western Company, like that of Crozat, was based not so much upon false hopes and statements as upon a false estimate of the time necessary to turn a colony into a good financial investment. The usual attempt to make it profitable before it was self-supporting was to be made, — an attempt which bade fair to press hard on the Company first, and the colonists afterwards.

There was no time, with a future of but twenty-five years, to wait for natural growth and development. The seed which should have been fructifying for twenty years past was still to be sowed. But the Company of 1718, like any company or trust of to-day, proposed to incubate for nature, and the various artificial stimuli of lethargic prosperity were to be remorselessly applied to Louisiana. In other words, Louisiana was to be "boomed," and by the archetypal "boomer" of financial history, John Law.

Agriculture, not mining, was the new countersign (always following Iberville's and Bienville's policy). Large concessions of land were to be granted, on condition of settlement and cultivation ; plantations were to be laid off on the banks of the Mississippi ; tobacco, rice, silk, indigo, tar, and ship-timber were to be exported ; abundant imports of provisions and merchandise were to render unnecessary, and consequently mitigate, the suppression of the illicit trade with Pensacola.

There was obviously but one man in the colony capable of handling it under the new, or, it might be said, any, conditions. De l'Épinay was summarily recalled, and he, Bienville, was made commandant-general, or governor, with a salary of six thousand livres a year. Hubert was retained, and named commissioner-general, with a salary of five thousand livres a year.

These appointments and the backing up of them by three ships with provisions, merchandise, and emigrants, threw the colonists into, for them, the novel excitement and exhilaration of hope and enterprise.

Bienville, without further delay, executed the oft-repeated orders to take possession of St. Joseph's Bay, — the unfortunate site of the apotheosis of La Salle's Mississippi attempt. Chateauguay was sent there with a detachment of fifty soldiers. He built a fort upon the ill-fated spot ; but French possession of it was no better assured thereby than in the first instance. In a short while the Spaniards persuaded the greater part of the garrison to desert, and the difficulties of sustaining the remainder, not in allegiance, but in life, caused their withdrawal during the course of the year.

An engineer was sent to sound the bar of the river.


Bienville and Chateauguay were also instructed to make soundings. Drags and grapnels were sent, to be tried, for the Mississippi scheme demanded at least a passage into the Mississippi.

Bienville's repeated demands for an establishment upon the Mississippi finally found a hearing ; but he was advised that the location was still to be considered. He was asked whether Manchac would not be better, on account of its double communication with Mobile by lake and river, and its command of Red River. Waiving such distant advice and judgment, and seizing the golden opportunity of means and authority once more in his hand, Bienville took fifty men himself and put them at once to clearing the land and building lodgings on the ground selected by himself years before, and to be abandoned for no Manchac ; the spot, a ridge of high land about thirty leagues from the mouth of the Mississippi, lying between the river and Lake Pontchartrain, with easy portage and bayou communication between the two, — the one site in his judgment for the city destined, as he was assured, to become the capital of the Mississippi valley. The map of the valley itself was divided out over in France by the Company, with the showy policy of such landed enterprises. To Law was conceded four square leagues upon the Arkansas. A company, headed by Leblanc, Secretary of State, the Comte de Belleville, and the Marquis d'Assleck, took possession of the Yazous. Concessions at Natchez were made to the commissioner, Hubert, and to a company of St. Malo merchants. Natchitoches was conceded to Bernard de la Harpe, the compiler of the "*Journal Historique* ;" Tunicas to St.

Reine ; Pointe Coupée to De Meuse ; the present site of Baton Rouge to Diron d'Artaguet ; the bank of the Mississippi opposite Manchac to Pâris Duvernay ; the Tchoupitoulas lands to De Muys ; that of the Oumas to the Marquis d'Ancouis ; Cannes-Brulées was given to the Marquis d'Artagnac ; the bank opposite to De Guiche, De la Houssaie, and De la Houpe ; Bay St. Louis to Madame de Mezières ; and Pascagoulas to Madame de Chaumont.

Ship after ship began to arrive from France, loaded by the new great enterprise, — soldiers, officers, agents, concessioners, and commissioners for the Company by the score. In one month alone, August, 1718, three ships brought over eight hundred passengers. Colonists were sent by the townful, had there been but towns to receive them, — sixty for the concession of M. Pâris Duvernay, at the old village of the Bayagoulas, seventy for the concession of De la Houssaie at the Yazous ; sixty for that of De la Harpe at the Natchitoches ; sixty-eight for the new post on the Mississippi, to be called New Orleans, in honour of Law's patron, the Regent ; and smaller parties for smaller grants of land.

The small establishments of Mobile and Dauphin Island staggered under the sudden burden put upon them, and Bienville's powers were more than taxed fulfilling the dazzling French terms of the Company, — free lodgings, food, and transportation to concessions. The concessions were scattered all over the Mississippi country : boats and carts had to be made to forward the emigrants to them ; provisions were consumed as fast as landed ; and the quality of the population sent, — a great number consisting of convicts, — forced a timely



and earnest protest from Bienville, despite his evident yielding to the exhilarating current of the "boom." He wrote that hardly a man was sent who was fitted for the most necessary work. He asked that more carpenters and labourers be sent, or at least men who could assist in making lodgings and transportations for themselves; or that carts at least be brought with them, and enough provision to feed them until they reached their destination. His own force of workmen was overwhelmed; he had to advance their pay to three dollars a day. "I have, nevertheless," he says, "been able to send M. de Boisbriant up the Illinois with one hundred men, and I flatter myself it is a great deal. I do not fear even to assure the council that it was absolutely all that could have been accomplished under the circumstances."

Among the eight hundred arrivals of August was the acute observer and genial *raconteur*, the first historian of Louisiana, Le Page du Pratz. He came with a force of ten men, and selected a tract of land to be located near the new city, on the banks of the Mississippi, already as a speculation assuming attractions to capitalists and emigrants. Du Pratz says his ship anchored in the open road before Dauphin Island. As soon as the *Te Deum* had been sung in thankfulness for the safe voyage, the passengers and their effects were landed. On the island he was lodged and fed, not by the Company, but by a friend, an old ship-captain, who treated him to the most wonderful good cheer, the fish particularly eliciting glowing praise. Bienville at the very time was absent, founding his city. Du Pratz' sojourn, his three days of waiting for the return of the commandant-general, gave

him an ardent desire to leave the sandy, arid crystalline island, which even the good cheer and companionship could not assuage.

Bienville expressed his satisfaction that Du Pratz had selected a location near the capital, as he called it, for he said that a good farm near a city was often of greater profit than lordly lands in a wood. He bought from Du Pratz a compass, — paying for it, the author chronicles, an honest price. It was for Du Tisé, just starting off for a journey by land to Canada. In a few days Bienville had the means of transportation in readiness, and Du Pratz, provided with a letter of introduction to the commandant of New Orleans, De Pailleux hastened the departure of his party with as much joy, he says, as diligence.

His boats followed the gently curving line of the Gulf coast, as it is called, camping the first night at the mouth of Pascagoula River, passing the next day before Biloxi, and then by Bay St. Louis, leaving Horn Island, Ship Island, Cat Island, behind them on the left, — the usual, and always beautiful, itinerary of the summer yacht. Going through the Rigolets, camping, *en passant*, on the Isle à Coquilles, he entered Lake Pontchartrain; Pointe aux Herbes and Bayou St. Jean dropped behind him, and Bayou Schoupique, which was guarded by a fort, received him. The boats ascended it for about a league, and landed at the old village of the Colapissas, or Aqueloupissas, as Dupratz learned correctly to pronounce the name of the “nation who see and hear.” The party was received by Jean Lavigne, a Canadian who had bought the village of the Aqueloupissas. Dupratz sought a location for his concession on the banks

of the Bayou St. Jean, at a short half league, he describes it, from the situation of the capital that was to be,—then only designated by a clearing and a log barracks covered with palmetto-leaves, the lodging for the commandant and troops. Having apparently the whole of Bayou St. Jean to choose from, the author became soon the contented and undisputed possessor of his farm, and the delighted owner of an Indian slave, than whom Shezehezarade was not more entertaining to her master. He commenced with avidity his experiments with the soil, his observations of nature, and his experiences with alligators and Indians. Differing with one of the latter in a barter of a gun for some chickens, and treating his correspondent with the suspicion which prudence had taught him to use in such affairs with inhabitants of the Old World, the Indian, incensed, took the road to New Orleans and complained to Bienville. Dupratz was summoned to explain his proceedings. He did so by exposing his opinion, or rather his idea, of the savages. "The governor replied," he narrates, "that I did not know these people yet, and that when I did know them, I should do them justice. He spoke the truth."

CHAPTER XXI.

1719.

ON the 19th of April the "Maréchal de Villars" and the "Philippe" brought into port one hundred and thirty passengers. Among them were De Serigny and his son, a midshipman ; the former, returning decorated with the cross of St. Louis and the advanced grade of "lieutenant de vaisseau," was charged with a commission to examine and sound, with Bienville, the coast of Louisiana.¹

But what the ships brought of most importance to the colony was the news of the declaration of war between France and Spain. At last the moment had come for the getting of the coveted port of Pensacola. The French hardly needed the advice given by the Western Company to Bienville some months previous to profit by such an opportunity. They were not the men to let an occasion of the kind go by default. A council of war was instantly summoned, and measures in all haste adopted to surprise the Spaniards, who, ignorant of the news, were carelessly basking in innocent security.

The cargoes were discharged from the ships, and on the 13th of May De Serigny sailed out of the roadstead

¹ De Serigny's maps form the beginning of the scientific cartography of the Mississippi delta.

of Dauphin Island, followed by the "Maréchal de Villars" and the "Comte de Toulouse," which latter vessel fortunately was in port at the time. They carried an army of a hundred and fifty soldiers. Bienville, with eighty men, sailed in a sloop.

Bienville gives the facts of his victory in his official report to the minister. The approaches to the victory are the pleasant duty of the early historians, Dupratz and Dumont, whose enjoyment of what they describe is communicated to readers of the present day.

With a fair wind the ships made a good run to Isle Ste. Rosa, the outpost of the Spaniards. Anchoring as close to land as possible, the troops disembarked unperceived, and easily mastered the small guard stationed there. Putting their prisoners in irons and assuming their uniforms, and forcing the Spanish drummer to beat as usual, the Spaniards who came out at daybreak the next morning to relieve guard were as easily seized, disarmed, and deprived of their uniforms, which served to disguise more of their enemies. The Spanish-uniformed Frenchmen embarking in the boat that had brought out the guard, crossed the bay, entered the fort, surprised the sentinels on duty, and captured the whole place, — soldiers, magazine, store-house, and the commandant, who was still in bed, and who claimed this as his first notification of the rupture between the two Governments. Bienville says in his despatch that simply the commandant surrendered the fort at four o'clock in the afternoon, that he put his brother Chateauguay in command, and according to the terms of capitulation to deliver his prisoners in the nearest port, shipped the entire garrison for Havana on his two ships, the "Comte

de Toulouse" and the "Maréchal de Villars," under command of De Richebourg; he then returned to Mobile. The Governor of Havana was not devoid of ingenuity himself. He received De Richebourg most ceremoniously, thanking him for the politeness of his visit; but no sooner were the prisoners in his hands than he captured the capturers, with their ships, placing the soldiers in irons, and putting the entire crew, officers and all, into prison, and, according to the French accounts, treated them so hardly, fed them so badly, and insulted them so grievously that most of the soldiers deserted to him, to deliver themselves. He then equipped the French vessels with a Spanish crew, Spanish soldiers, and some of the French deserters, and sent them, with his squadron, to retake the lost Pensacola. They came in sight of it on the 3d of August. The Spanish vessels drew up behind Isle Ste. Rosa. The French vessels, flying the French colours, boldly entered the channel. To the challenge of the sentry they answered, "De Richebourg." Scarcely was anchor dropped, however, than the French flag was lowered, the Spanish run up, and three cannon-shots were fired. At the signal, the rest of the squadron made their appearance, twelve sail in all. The next day eighteen hundred men were landed, and began the assault.

Although the return visit of the Spaniards was expected, and in a measure prepared for, Chateauguay found his means of defence as totally inadequate as his rivals' had been. Sixty of his soldiers immediately abandoned him, escaping from the fort and joining the enemy. The rest showing every disposition to follow their example, no choice was left, upon the summons to surrender, but

capitulation. He obtained the sortie, with all the honours of war, and transportation to Old Spain, — a more genial and more advantageous place of imprisonment than Havana, under the circumstances. He was nevertheless sent to Havana. At the news of the Spaniards' reappearance at Pensacola, Serigny had hastened by land to Chateauguay's assistance with a troop of savages and soldiers; but hearing of his surrender midway from some fugitive slaves, he turned, and marched as rapidly back to Dauphin Island to prepare for what he had no doubt would be the next step in the Spanish programme.

In truth, he had hardly arrived at the island before the advance of the Spanish flotilla was sighted. Three brigantines approached, from one of which a boat was sent to the Company's ship, "*Le Philippe*," with an officer charged with a letter to the captain. The missive, dated "on board '*Notre Dame de Vigogne*,' 13th August, 1719, at ten o'clock in the morning," contained an imperative summons for the surrender of the ship, without any damage to it, under penalty of the captain's being treated as an incendiary, and all the French, including Chateauguay and his garrison, accorded no quarter. A cordial reception, on the contrary, was promised all those who freely and willingly gave themselves up.

The captain of the "*Philippe*" sent the Spanish officer with his letter ashore to Serigny, who, according to the "*Journal Historique*," received him surrounded by his soldiers, Canadians, and savages in all their war-paint and greed of scalps; and according to Bienville, told him that the Spaniards could come when they pleased, they would find the French prepared to receive them.

In the mean time a reinforcement of soldiers was passed on board the "Philippe."

During the night one of the brigantines entered the bay and did considerable damage, capturing two boats of provisions sent by Serigny to Bienville, and pillaging and burning a settlement belonging to a company of Canadians on the Mobile coast, half way between the fort and the island, where a great deal of property had been sent from the latter place for security, and of which the booty consequently was large.

Fortunately that night Bienville was sending a reinforcement of white men and Indians to his brother. These fell upon the marauders. Very few escaped. Five were killed, the Indians scalping them, six were drowned trying to regain their boats, and eighteen were taken prisoners. Of these latter, the deserters from the French had their heads broken with a hatchet, in default of an executioner to inflict the legal capital punishment. As it was impossible to defend the bay or the mouth of the river, no more boats of provisions, or otherwise, were risked to Bienville. All forces were turned to putting Dauphin Island in a state of defence.

During a high tide the "Philippe" was brought in to within a pistol-shot of land, and made fast with pile and cable in a deep hole, or kind of bay, to the west of the island. With all her guns bristling on the ocean tide, and her reinforced equipage, she presented, for the times, a formidable citadel of defence to the enemy.

An intrenched battery of three twelve-pounders was placed to command the old channel. The rest of the island was patrolled by Serigny, who, the accounts say, multiplied himself into being everywhere with his mixed

force, the regulars of which, Bienville says, were more to be dreaded than the enemy.


Three days after the brigantines the rest of the Spanish fleet, including the captured French vessels, hove in sight, and anchored in the roadstead. Once or twice a demonstration of attack was made, which was warded off with a counter-demonstration. Neither daring to land nor approach within gunshot of the "Philippe" or the battery, the fleet contented itself with remaining in its position for fourteen days, and canonading boats from a safe and harmless distance.

On the 24th, signs of departure were observed among the sails ; by the 28th all had disappeared, with the exception of two large vessels left to cruise before the island and intercept its water communication.

The long stay of the Spanish fleet excited apprehensions among the French that it was waiting to be joined by the squadron from Vera Cruz. When, therefore, on the 1st of September, sails were again sighted in the Gulf, as no ships were expected from France, the general anxiety became keen. It changed to wildest joy as three war-ships of the royal navy neared, escorting two loaded vessels belonging to the Company. They were the "Hercules," of sixty cannon, under the Comte de Champmeslin, the "Mars," of fifty-eight, and the "Triton," of fifty-six cannon. The Company's ship, the "Union," armed with forty-eight cannon, brought one hundred and ninety-nine passengers, and the fleet "Marie" a freight of provisions and merchandise. The Spanish cruisers took flight for Pensacola.

As soon as the good news reached him, Bienville hastened from Mobile, and with Serigny went aboard

Champmeslin's ship, where a council of all the officers, military and marine, was held. The recapture of Pensacola and capture of the Spanish fleet was the unanimous determination ; but it was decided not to proceed without a fortnight's preparation. The Company's ships, which were to be joined to the men-of-war, had to be unloaded, the "Philippe" to be got out to sea again and put in trim, and Bienville needed time to get his Indians together again and prepare their provisions. It was agreed that Champmeslin should take command of the fleet, and that Bienville, at the head of a company of soldiers and volunteers, should go in sloops as far as the Perdido River, where one of his officers was to meet him with five hundred Indians, — all of which was carried into effect. On the 15th of September the start was made. By the evening of the 16th Bienville had invested the fort by land, so that no escape on that side was possible. The next morning Champmeslin led his fleet into the bay. The large fort made very little defence. The small one on Ste. Rosa Island and the ships fought gallantly for two hours, at the end of which all surrendered. The plundering of the large fort was given to the Indians, who acquitted themselves, says the "*Journal Historique*," as men who knew their trade ; but there was no scalping, Bienville having given orders against it. The same authority also states that Bienville restrained the ardour of his troops and held them back until Champmeslin had terminated his action, that the latter might have the honours of the day, but that when the pillaging of the fort was completed, Champmeslin took possession of forts and ships, assigned the commands, decided upon the prisoners, and received the swords of the Spanish



officers, trenching upon the rights of Bienville as commander of the province of Louisiana, and therefore as the sole appointer of landed commands — which Bienville bore without protestation, for fear of prejudicing the service of the king.

Thirty-five of the French deserters were found among the Spanish prisoners. They were tried before a council of war; twelve were condemned to be hanged (and were hanged from the mast of the recaptured "Comte de Toulouse"), and the rest sent to the galleys.

It had been hoped that large quantities of munitions of war and provisions would be found in the fort. To the disappointment of the conquerors, the stores contained only a fifteen days' supply. Champmeslin was obliged, to get rid of feeding his prisoners, to send them to Havana on one of the captured ships. He retained the superior officers as sureties, and demanded a return of French prisoners, whose fate, according to a letter received from Chateauguay, was hardly in accordance with the articles of war. The Governor of Havana had not wished to give food either to officers or sailors, and the latter were forced to carry stone and do other work to gain a subsistence.

Stores were replenished by several Spanish vessels of provisions, decoyed into the old port by the exhibition of their national flags, — one, a "pink," carried eighty soldiers, of whom it is chronicled with evident satisfaction that although well clothed in good uniforms, they were not despoiled of them.

One of the Company's vessels, loaded with merchandise for Dauphin Island, and with a present of wine and delicacies from the Company to the officers, was sig-

nalled into the new French port. The officers, not needing the wine and delicacies, disposed of them at very great profit.

The supineness of the Spaniard under dispossession was not to be counted on in the future. Before sailing away with his squadron, in October, Champmeslin burned the fort and all the buildings behind him, and left only an officer, with a file of men and some savages, in charge, and to give notice of a new Spanish attempt.

Bienville writes bitterly of the character and insufficiency of his forces, the cause of this unsatisfactory proceeding : —

“ The Council will permit me to represent to it that it is very disagreeable for an officer in charge of a colony to have, to defend it, only a band of deserters, convicts, and rascals who are always ready, not only to abandon you, but even to turn against you. What attachment to the country can these people have, who are sent here by force, and who have no hope of returning to their mother-country ? Can one believe that they will not use all their efforts to deliver themselves from such a situation, particularly in a country as open as this is, by going either to the side of the English or the Spaniards ? It seems to me that it is absolutely necessary, if it is desired to preserve this colony to the king, to send as much as possible only willing men, and to endeavour to procure for life here more comforts than have been enjoyed up to the present. . . . At any rate, what population we have in the colony is so scattered among the different establishments that our only forces are the savages, of whom we cannot make use at present, owing to the scarcity of provisions. If we had sufficient force we should be able to maintain ourselves against any

efforts of the Spaniards, although they are, with the neighbouring Havana and Vera Cruz, very powerful, — unless they should send large vessels to cruise on our coasts and capture the supplies sent from France, which is their idea, from what we have heard from the French deserters. In this manner it would be very easy for them to throw us in the last extremity, and put it out of our power to preserve the colony, if the Company does not send us means strong enough to make our coasts secure."

CHAPTER XXII.

1719-1722.

GROWN suddenly by its influx of population and interests beyond its primitive colonial administration of judgment, Louisiana had reached the need of the legal forms and practices common to the civilized world from which it sprang. The Company of the West responded with adequate provisions; but the uncertainty which human character and temperament throws into all appointments, caused the usual disappointments and retardation of public affairs. Under the circumstances, the prolongation for a short period of gubernatorial arbitrariness (if such existed) would have been better for the colony.

The Superior Council of the capital, which held a sitting once a month, was retained and reformed, to include the governor, Bienville, Hubert, the *commissaire ordonnateur*, first councillor Boisbriant, and Chateauguay, royal officers, with three other councillors chosen from among other directors or agents of the Company, an attorney-general, and a secretary. This was an appellate court for the smaller councils, or inferior tribunals, established in every locality where sufficient population could be found to furnish the constituting elements, — an agent of the Company and two “notable” inhabitants.

Although, as M. Gayarré notes, Bienville occupied the place of honour at the council, the real president was the first councillor, Hubert, who in any division of sentiment would as naturally rally the Company's employees to his side, as Bienville would his brother and cousin. Unfortunately in such a division the majority of voices would not have expressed, and did not express, the best practical knowledge and judgment. And it was this practical knowledge and judgment that the situation of Louisiana demanded.

There were the usual Indian troubles to the north ; more than usually grave, in that the English were more than usually successful in their machinations among Chickasaws and Choctaws ; but as long as the Mississippi was kept open and safe for the French, the rush of development of the country by the hard-pressed capitalists of the Company in France, left the local rulers of it no time or thought for its defence, beyond Bienville's persistently warning the French against the English traders.

The Mississippi scheme was beginning to become the Mississippi bubble. Inflation was preparing its usual result of immolation. But the victims in the Old World were financial, those in the new, human ; and the wrecks of the fortunes which strewed the Rue Quincampoix were more than matched by the corpses that strewed the beaches of Dauphin Island and Biloxi.

In 1720 the ships from France brought in emigrants by the hundred, hundred and fifty, two hundred, four hundred, — the "fillings" for titled concessions, or the deluded peasants and traders, whose sordid economies had been expended for the seigneurial estates, with future


nobility and fortune, in the New World, so temptingly put upon the market of a war-scraped, famine-stricken country by the wonderful new Company, with its wonderful new patent for coining money from "faith," as credulity was termed.

Landed upon the sands of Dauphin Island, ill from the voyage, without shelter, with insufficient food, unable to get away, unable to find work, or gain anything by cultivating the arid soil, tortured and blinded by the dazzling crystalline sand under the rays of a tropical sun, exposed to the infections of the ships from the islands, always waiting and hoping for the delayed transportation inland, it is easy to believe the statement that most of the unfortunates died of their misery.

The directors of the Company, finding themselves more and more helpless before the increasing complications of their situation, more and more inadequate to meet the increasing demands upon them, panic-stricken at the crisis which they foresaw impending, could, in their ignorances, grievances, and divided counsels, think of no remedial expedient but a change of base.

Bienville exerted himself in vain in favour of his project, — establishment upon the Mississippi, its colonization by the direct transportation of emigrants to farms on its rich alluvial soil, and their immediate self-support by agriculture.

Hubert had his counter-project, which he had already recommended to the Company, a year before, — the centralizing of the colony at Biloxi, with Ship Island fortified as a port. Absurd as it seems now, absurd as it must have appeared then to the men who had lived through one experiment at that spot, Hubert's project



was adopted by the Superior Council, and received the indorsement of the Company. Biloxi henceforth was to be the capital. The move was effected with all haste, to the great expense to the Company, and loss to the colonists. By 1721 Dauphin Island was a way station, Ship Island the receiving port, and Biloxi the depot of merchandise and emigrants. The sequel is lamentable.

The number of emigrants increased instead of diminishing, and the quality of them worsened with every shipload. The Company, to keep up its "boom" before its shareholders in France by its tide of emigration, was exporting its scrapings of asylums, hospitals, reformatories, and its midnight nettings of Paris streets by its paid dog-catchers of humanity. And, in addition, slave-ships began to answer the demand, by bringing in their naked, reeking African cargo of misery, degradation, and wretchedness, to be dumped like ballast on Biloxi beach. The historians and romancers of the time describe the French side of this peopling of the Mississippi. What took place as a result in Louisiana, in the absence of private letters, must be inferred from such a casual entry into the "*Journal Historique*" as, "4th April, 1721, M. Berranger . . . was sent to Cape François; he was to fetch back corn for food for the negroes who were dying of hunger and misery on the sands of Fort Louis," and from the careful description of *Le Page Du Pratz*. At the solicitation of his friend, who had large concessions and larger expectations there, he had changed the location of his farm from New Orleans to Natchez. About two years after his settlement there he made a trip down the river to New Orleans to sell some of his commodities, and also having heard that all let-

ters sent to France were intercepted, he wished to assure himself of some reliable means of communication. And *à propos* of this, he relates that although not on friendly terms with the commandant of Natchez, who was anxious to ingratiate himself with the governor at the expense of everybody, he offered to take charge of any letters which the former might have for the latter. The commandant said he had no letters, in spite of the fact that Du Pratz knew he had letters for Bienville. Du Pratz, equal to him, however, obtained from his head clerk a certificate that he had so offered and been refused. Arrived in New Orleans, and hearing of the arrival of some new concessioners at Biloxi, he determined to take his commodities there. Paying his respects to the governor in Biloxi, Bienville asked that official if he had no letters for him. He was told that Du Pratz had asked for letters and been refused; upon which he said, coldly, that Du Pratz had not wished to take charge of them. "For all reply," says the historian, "I pulled out the certificate and showed it him." And then he goes on with, —

"I never could divine the reason why the principal establishment of the colony should have been placed in that spot, or why it should have been wished to locate the capital there; nothing could have been more contrary to good sense, for not only vessels could not approach it nearer than four leagues, but, what was more vexatious, nothing could be discharged from the ships there without three changes from smaller to smaller boats, — and even, to discharge the smallest boats, carts had to be sent out over a hundred paces into the water. And what should still have averted the establishment of Biloxi is that the soil is of the most sterile; it is nothing but fine sand, white and

brilliant, on which it is impossible to make a vegetable grow ; and in addition, one was extremely annoyed by the rats, which swarm there, which gnaw even the wood of the guns. The famine had been so great there that more than five hundred persons had died of hunger. Bread was very dear, meat very scarce ; there was only fish, in which the place abounds, and which was tolerably plentiful. The famine arose from the arrival of so many of the concessioners together, so that not enough provisions were on hand to feed them, nor boats to transport them to their destination, as the Company was obligated to do. What saved some, was the great quantity of oysters found along the shore ; but to get them, one had to go out in the water, up to the thighs, a distance of a gunshot from the shore. If this food nourished some, it made others ill, which was also due to the long time they had to stay in the water."

"Most of the dead bodies found lying by heaps of oyster-shells were Germans," says Dumont, — Law's colonists for his own concessions on the Arkansas ; the most regretted of his victims, on account of the sterling qualities of the survivors, who have perpetuated their good record of honest laboriousness to this day. The disasters were not all land disasters ; the Company's vessels, as well as the colony, are arraigned by such items in the "Journal Historique" as : "1st March, 1721 . . . Arrived, forty Germans for the concession of M. Law, the remains of two hundred embarked ; the others had died during the voyage. 17th, 'L'Africain' . . . arrived with one hundred and ninety negroes of Inida, of two hundred and ninety shipped." — "23d . . . Arrived with three hundred and fourteen negroes, of four hundred and fifty-three shipped." — "20th April . . . The frigate 'Néréide,' . . . two hundred and ninety-four negroes,

the remains of three hundred and fifty, . . . bringing the news that the frigate 'Charles,' loaded with negroes, had been burned more than sixty miles from the coast, that most of the crew had perished, that those who were saved had suffered much from hunger and thirst, having been reduced to load their sloops with several negroes for subsistence;" and other similar tragedies that might be cited.

A drunken sleeping sergeant, by letting his lighted pipe fall in his tent, started a fire which consumed Biloxi to the ground and terminated its history as the capital of Louisiana.

A council of all the colonial executive directors, engineers, and officers was held, and another transference of headquarters was decided upon. Bienville again made an effort in favour of the Mississippi and New Orleans, again set forth his arguments, which were backed with no less authority than that of Diron d'Artaguet, the director-general of Louisiana for the Company; and again Hubert made test of strength, and again proved his majority of votes in the council. Hubert, associating New Orleans with its founder, and the Mississippi with New Orleans, had become as violent an opponent of both as Cadillac, for the same reasons, had been. And Hubert's friends had become his partisans against what they also considered a rival platform of a rival and Canadian government. The point of land opposite Deer Island, called thenceforth New Biloxi, was chosen for the seat of government, and orders for its establishment carried into effect at once, regardless, as before, of expense to the Company and loss to the colonists.

Bienville met the persistent denial, in the face of ex-

perience, of the possibility of loaded vessels entering the mouth of the Mississippi, by the proposition to send the "Dromadaire," one of the Company's vessels then in port, through it, as a test. One of the directors, Le Gac, opposed this violently, on the strength of a certificate of the captain of the "Dromadaire" that his vessel could not get through the mouth of the river. Bienville then took it upon himself to declare that he would send the vessel through it on his own responsibility, Le Gac warning him, if he did so, that he would be held liable for any consequent damages. The "Dromadaire" was in fact carried triumphantly through the passes some months later.

In France, the Mississippi scheme had become the Mississippi bubble ; collapse had succeeded to inflation. The Louisiana directors, taxed on all sides for contribution to the disaster by the extravagance of their expenditures, and for the discreditable disorders and wretchedness in the colony, which letters and rumours had made a public scandal in France, vented some of their bitterness upon their colonial vicegerent, in a letter dated 20th October, 1720, — a letter of which Bienville's organ, the "*Journal Historique*," gives a version with indignation. The Company had heard with grief that a complete division between Bienville and the directors had thrown the affairs of the colony into a frightful state of chaos ; he could conceive the effect that such news, spread throughout the kingdom, had produced on all minds. The Company had been blamed for appointing rulers so negligent of the Company's interests, so careful of their own. His Royal Highness thought Bienville the author of all the disorders, and that far

from keeping the promise given to accord him the grade of brigadier in the royal army, and to raise him to commander in the order of St. Louis, had taken a stand very unfavourable to him ; and notwithstanding the explanations of the directors that it was the Company's agents who had thwarted the governor in every way, the prince had replied that the favours of kings were only given for effective services, and that to deserve them Bienville must show himself worthy of them. The directors added that a new director-in-chief of the Company would be sent to Louisiana, from whom — most optimistically, it must seem — they hoped a better future.

As the honours withheld had been announced to him as accorded by both the Company and the Minister of War, Bienville, says the "*Journal Historique*," was exceedingly mortified. His first idea was to write to his Royal Highness himself, not on account of the lost testimonials, but to rehabilitate his reputation, and fix the blame of the state of affairs in Louisiana on the right parties, by showing that his authority had been so curtailed that he could not even nominate his own officers to commission, but could only recommend them to the Company's agents.

If the letter was written, it has not been retained in the official documents ; and mayhap the only answer the reprimand received from Bienville was a more vigorous pushing forward of his dominant idea, infused by the Company's hope that the new director-general would indeed inaugurate a better future. His determination was to prove beyond peradventure his scheme, — not only the practicable one, but the only practicable one, in the eyes of all, even of his bitterest opponents. The

Company, by sending a corps of capable engineers to Louisiana, had made the proof of the navigability of the Mississippi a question of science, not of personality or partisanship, as it had been. As usual, Bienville was not slow in turning circumstances to his profit. The *Sieur le Blond de la Tour*, chief of the engineers for Louisiana, being detained from sailing by illness, his second in command, the *Sieur Pauger*, preceded him to Biloxi with the workmen. One infers from after events that during the interval between his and his chief's arrival, Pauger was made by Bienville an advocate of the advantages of his colonial plan as against Hubert's; and a similar inference supposes an early conversion of De la Tour, if not to Hubert's scientifically untenable topographical position, to his prejudices. The results were as grievous a difference between the two engineers as that of which the Company complained between the commissary and the governor, but the gaining of his point by Bienville.

After the completion of the engineering work at New Biloxi, De la Tour, ill again, was forced to send his lieutenant in his place to perform the much-needed work of laying out New Orleans as a regular city, as Pauger explains it. Hampered and retarded as usual by the agents of the Company, he accomplished the task, — cleared the neglected space, alligned the streets, assigned allotments, and made a plan of the whole, containing the names of the owners to the allotments, which he forwarded to the council, receiving their approval.

During an enforced respite in this work, and after its completion, he made two trips to the mouth of the river, sounding the passes, making a map of them, and writ-

ing a report upon them, "thinking," as he wrote to the Company, "that so much zeal and hard work would gratify the Company. Instead, he had received a reprimand for assuming authority which did not belong to him, his zeal being made a crime, on the false reports of commissioners, who, for all their reporting upon officers, are not the more faithful in performance of their duty, but are the cause of all the discord in the colony." There is a more satisfactory reason for Pauger's reprimand, in a communication from the governor to the minister, dated a few days prior to Pauger's letter. Bienville's encloses Pauger's written report of the river, and a map, "sent surreptitiously," he says, "Pauger not wishing to give it without order of his superior."

The documents were final in their reach, — they killed Biloxi, and assured the future of New Orleans. The soundings guaranteed a free entrance through the passes for third-class vessels; the insuperable obstacle, the bar, was found to be a shifting deposit of mud, removable under a full current of the river, which Pauger proposed to guard against, by a simple plan, enclosed, of stopping certain outlets and jettying certain localities.

Just at the time, June, 1721, the news of Law's failure and flight reached the colony. All enterprise, all hope, was for the moment paralyzed, and an epidemic of the panic of the distant capital seemed imminent. But ships, emigrants, soldiers, and merchandise continued to arrive; and whatever the depths to which the paper valuations of her resources could descend, in France and on the spot, through the flimsy card currency imposed upon the community, Louisiana herself held steadily solvent to all investors of honest work in her soil; and such in-

vestors, despite all others' failures, had become more and more numerous and confident.

Bienville, himself, continued the pressing upon the Company of Pauger's documents, and his arguments and his objections to the wasting of men, work, and money on Ship Island and Biloxi. He writes again, assuring them that vessels drawing thirteen feet could enter the river under full sail without touching bottom, and that it would not be difficult to render the pass practicable for larger vessels.

"I should already have had work done upon it if the engineers whose duty it particularly is were of the same opinion; but they were solely occupied with Biloxi. . . . Have taken upon myself to send through the river two flutes, one of three hundred, and one of four hundred tons. They entered under full sail. I should have done the same with others that have lately arrived, if such precise orders had not been given to discharge these vessels at Biloxi."

He repeated Du Pratz' description of the costly and tedious methods of unloading which the choice of Biloxi imposed upon the Company.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1721-1723.

IN the summer of 1721 the new director-general, Duvergier, announced by the Company, arrived. His commission made him commandant of marine, and president of the Superior Council, with a salary of twenty thousand livres a year. Although he brought to Bienville the augmentation of his salary to an equal figure, to Chateauguay and Boisbrillant the cross of St. Louis, and to the younger officers, among them Bienville's nephew, De Noyau, advanced grades, his own prerogatives and authority more than counterbalanced the effect of these gratifications. Bienville saw himself again superseded at the council; Chateauguay imagined that his rank of captain and services entitled him to the command of the marine; and each member of the Canadian staff saw some cause of resentment in the manner in which his rightful authority, as he considered it, was administered by another foreigner, a stranger in the colony, an alien to all the past hardships and vicissitudes.

But there were still hardships and vicissitudes enough in the colony, at least around Biloxi, to graduate any new-comer through experience to merit according to the curriculum of colonial education. There was not only the same problem to feed the emigrants and negroes that arrived, and the large body of soldiers and

workman gathered around headquarters, but there were all the disorders to be anticipated from the indiscriminate sowings of convicts and vagrants in a new, thinly settled, flimsily protected Government.

Garrisons in distant posts deserted in squads to the English when they did not join the savages in ambuscading and waylaying their late commanders. Crews mutinied, capturing their vessels and sailing off to the Caribbean Islands. Between Ship Island and the mouth of the river the sloops of workmen would also rid themselves of overseers and guards, and make a landing, which could easily enable them in any direction to attain liberty and license. And again, the Indians along the watercourses were raising their hands against travellers.

In September, the colony learned that the Company of the Indies had been put in liquidation. Three commissioners landed, charged to examine into the accounts of the colony. As Hubert had not kept a written register of his accounts, he was summoned to render them orally before Bienville and the rest of the directors capable of passing upon them,—which, says the "*Journal Historique*," embarrassed him very much. He excused Bienville; but when the other directors straightened out his affairs for him, Bienville, at their solicitation, signed the statement.

Duvergier enjoyed but a short period of his authority, which he seems to have exercised mainly, according to his subordinates, in arbitrary making and unmaking of officers in his marine. Bienville, a few months later, was given the precedence at the council board; but with a reduction of salary to twelve thousand livres a year,—

which, however, as he was informed by the Company, was no reduction at all, as it was to be paid in currency. In the spring of 1722 Duvergier returned to France loaded with written complaints and affidavits against different individuals, promising to procure the dismissal of Bienville, Boisbrillant, and Chateauguay, and the cassation of several minor officers. Hubert followed him to France some months afterwards, voicing the same kind intentions, in spite of a seeming reconciliation which Father Charlevoix, passing through the colony, effected between him and Bienville. The directors and engineers were still spending money and work upon Biloxi, with their fixed idea of the permanency of the position as headquarters of the colony; buildings were being erected there, a hospital was being put upon Deer Island, the plan of a fort made and adopted for Ship Island, — when in May, 1722, two new commissioners from the Company in France arrived, Messieurs de Sannoy and De la Chaise. Assuming control of the administration and the regulation of the long-standing confusion in the accounts between Crozat and the Company of the Indies, they inaugurated their rule by terminating, in Bienville's favour, his long contest with a past decade of governors, agents, directors, and commissaries. They ordered the transportation of the seat of government to New Orleans, and, as Bienville also had urged, the establishment of a post on the Arkansas, by which communication could be kept open between the lower colony and the Illinois, and the introduction of live-stock from the Spanish possessions in the West effected. A memorial, or manifesto, in twelve articles, regulated anew the tariff for slaves and

merchandise, currency and budget of expenses, divided Louisiana into five civil and three great religious districts, and exhorted, in the last article, a more regular attention to Christian duties than had been observed in the past. All evidences bespoke, instead of an abandonment of Louisiana in consequence of Law's failure, a reasonable and judicious pushing forward of the colony.

De la Tour, however, was made lieutenant-general of the province, which ("Journal Historique") was taken as a mortifying rebuff by Bienville and Chateauguay. The commissioners brought also the announcement of the re-establishment to health of the king, and his marriage with the Infanta of Spain, and also the marriage of the Prince of Asturias with Mademoiselle Montpensier. Public rejoicings were ordered for the occasion, and the sending of a boat, with felicitations, to Havana and Vera Cruz, — a very appropriate suggestion, remarks the "Journal Historique," if there were thought in it for the advantages of secret commerce. The *Te Deum* was sung, and the ceremony of blessing the flags was performed. Bienville presented De la Tour to the troops as lieutenant-general of the colony, at five o'clock in the afternoon all the vessels in port fired three salutes with cannon and musketry, and at night there were "feux de joie." The double alliance between the two Crowns made the longer retention of Pensacola hopelessly impossible. It was formally surrendered to its original owners in the beginning of the year 1723. The work of transference of the capital to New Orleans was begun without delay, and prosecuted with vigour. On the 10th of June (1722) De la Tour and Pauger both sailed as

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avant-coureurs, to take the pink "Aventurier" through the mouth of the Mississippi. Word was brought back that she had passed the bar on the 1st of July. Other boats followed, with men, building materials, ammunition, and provisions. Under De la Tour's supervision, the prospective city took form and shape. A church and houses were built, levees thrown up, ditches dug, and a great canal was constructed in the rear for drainage. A cemetery was located, and a quay constructed, protected with palisades. Bienville arrived and took up his residence there in August. To Pauger was assigned a post at the Belize. With fifty workmen and a dredge-boat, his admirable sagacity and enterprise performed marvels in an incredibly short time, working for the colony and New Orleans as no one had ever worked for it but Bienville. Besides keeping a pass open, he built, out of the drift caught from the river, lodgings, store-houses, boats, a smithy, and a chapel with a belfry that could serve for a lighthouse; while his garden furnished the gladdest of welcomes both to the eye and heart of the weary incoming sea-traveller.

New Orleans, however, had no more fortunate beginnings than Mobile or Biloxi. In the midst of the building and transportation, the September storm came on with a hitherto unexperienced violence. For five days the furious south wind, raging from east to west, swept land and sea. The ripened crops of rice, corn, and beans were utterly destroyed, the houses and buildings of the planters blown down. In New Orleans the church, hospital, and most of the new edifices were demolished, and three vessels wrecked in the river. At Biloxi, the magazine, with all the stores, and a ship

with its cargo of ammunition and food, were destroyed ; almost all the boats, sloops, and pirogues were lost, and two ships rendered totally unfit for service. For a week the greatest apprehensions were suffered on account of the three ships anchored at Ship Island and the "Dromadaire," on its way to the mouth of the river with the pine timber for a storehouse which had cost the Company over a hundred thousand livres ; and the first comfort in the desolation came from the news that none of the vessels had suffered. The "Dromadaire" had ridden through the storm in safety at the mouth of the river, the other vessels at their harbourage at Ship Island. All of them arrived in course of time at New Orleans, passing, as it was invariably recorded at the time, with facility and safety over the bar. Another crop of rice came up from the seeds scattered by the storm, — a proof of the fertility of the land, which came also as a great consolation to the colonists ; but the destruction of other food which could not be replaced, brought upon them the affliction of another one of those short, sharp, cruel terms of famine suffered in the old days of government neglect. And with the proverbial generosity of misfortune in New Orleans, the fevers that always follow a midsummer turning-up of the soil there, broke out, with great mortality. The indomitable Bienville himself fell dangerously ill, and for a long time his life was despaired of, — an illness which the "Journal Historique" attributes to grief at so many *contre-temps* in the colony, and finding himself, after twenty-three years of service upon it, with no assured rank in it. Writing to the minister, February 1, 1723, he, however, makes no allusion to his

fever or other illness, reporting only the rendition of Pensacola, the goodly quantity of scalps brought back by the Choctaws from the war-path upon which he had sent them against the Chickasaws, the complete abandonment of Biloxi, where only one military company remained, and his work of establishing a battery and garrison at the mouth of the river to protect it "from insult."

Within six months the newly restored Spaniards at Pensacola renewed their ancient neighbourly relations. The commandant wrote to Bienville, asking the loan of some provisions until his supplies, which were daily expected, arrived from Vera Cruz, offering to come to New Orleans for them. Bienville and the council, however, with more wisdom than the Spaniards had shown in regard to Pensacola, in consenting to the loan, waived the compliment of the visit, with its impolitic results of introducing the Spaniards to the mouth of the river and the state of the city, by delivering the provisions asked in Mobile.

The disaffected Natchez tribes had gradually recovered from the crushing punishment inflicted upon them, and again, influenced either by the English or by the Chickasaws, allies of the English, had commenced their depredations and ambushed assaults upon the French, — attempts which had grown in boldness until fears were entertained for the safety of the post. After the usual routine of pacificatory measures, — summoning the chiefs to him, haranguing them, re-baiting their loyalty with presents, all to no effect, — Bienville saw himself forced to an attitude more intelligible or more imposing to the savage mind. In October, 1723, he landed

suddenly at the Natchez with a small army of seven hundred men, — regulars, volunteers, and Indians (Tunicas, Choctaws, and Yazous). To give the rebellious villagers no time to rally or fortify, he began his march against them the morning after arrival. Stung Serpent, always on his old terms with the French, and more than ever a diplomatist, hurried to Fort Rosalie, where the commandant slept, and commenced his negotiations before the latter had time to join the march. He came, he said, to beg pardon for his nation, confessing that the people of the White Apple, Tenzenaque, and Gray Village were in a state of insurrection, which he himself had not been able to overcome. All that he apparently obtained from Bienville was that vengeance should strike only the three guilty villages, and that the Great Village and the Corn Village should be spared. It was on All Saints' Day that the army, with all precautions for their surprise, filed through the narrow paths of the forest surrounding the doomed White Apple Village. They came to a mud cabin, before which were three squaws pounding corn. The women ran in and closed the door after them. Two or three warriors inside made a defence, but they were expeditiously killed and scalped, and the women made prisoners. With the exception of one or two individual exploits of Canadians and Indian scouts, this was the only warlike achievement of the French in the campaign. The White Apple Village was found evacuated, deserted, — nothing but empty cabins. It was burned. The army returned to St. Catherine's Concession, whence they had set out in the morning. A few days later, the commandant led his army against the

Gray Village, with the same result. Not an Indian was to be seen. The abandoned village and temple were burned. From a captured squaw it was learned that the Indians were awaiting the French at the Tenzenaque village, a half league away. "On this," relates, with gusto, Dumont,¹ the historian of the occasion, "the army wheeled about, and the Tunica chief took the lead, marching right on the enemy. Some time after, a strong cabin was discovered, built on a height; here it was believed the Indians were to be found. The drums beat at once, the fifes struck up, and the army, forming into a square battalion, advanced on the cabin. The Tunica chief, who was at the head, first reached the height. He approached the cabin, examined it, and found it empty. The Indians had abandoned it so precipitately that they had left behind some guns, balls, and horns of powder. The Tunica chief, taking a turn around the height, perceived below him one of the enemy's chiefs called the 'Little Sun,' or rather, they both at the same time saw each other, aimed, and fired. The Tunica chief stretched his enemy dead on the spot, but fell himself dangerously wounded."

The army again returned to St. Catherine's, and Bienville summoned Stung Serpent to him. The chief presented himself. It was not Bienville's hour of triumph, as on the little island of the Mississippi, and one wishes for a glimpse into the Serpent's heart during the interview which resulted in the elaborate peace and pardon accorded the absent rebels. The terms were not onerous, — the head of Old Hair, the chief of

¹ Dumont's History of Louisiana; French's Hist. Coll.

the White Apple Village, and of a free negro who had deserted from the French to the Indians. The Serpent requested three days, at the end of which he brought the bloody ransom ; and the second war of the Natchez, as it was called, was over.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1723-1725.

DUVERGIER was arrested on arrival in France for leaving the colony without permission of the Company. In disculpating himself, he no doubt seized the desired opportunity to incriminate others and make good his promises of vengeance to his enemies. Hubert had exposed himself to no such disgrace, but his advent in his native country was nevertheless not unmarred with humiliating experiences. He wrote to the minister, Paris, April 11, 1723, that he had been obliged to keep his chamber on account of a writ of arrest against him for a letter of change he had not been able to acquit. He sent his memoir on Louisiana by his wife. Different from Cadillac's celebrated paper, it gave full credit to Providence for his excellent creation of a country, for the spoiling of which Bienville alone stood responsible. For two years he, the writer, had suffered the greatest humiliations and risk of life for himself and family from the tyrannous dealings of the commandant. Colonists had been put in irons for exposing themselves to make the complaints that he was doing, etc. A marginal note here on the document, "Keep in the Secretariat, without showing in the office," evidently tabled Hubert and the rest of his arraignment. An affidavit of a few months later travelled farther. It

was drawn up in somewhat imposing form, dated New Orleans, August 28, 1723, signed by Ragnet, a sub-commissioner, countersigned by Father Raphaël de Luxembourg, Superior of the Capuchins and Curate of New Orleans, with a notarial certificate of its copy from the original, dated 17th September, 1723. Its contents were as follows:—

“The *Sieur Ragnet*, wishing to discharge his conscience, and obeying Holy Church, our Mother, . . . declares before the curate of this city of New Orleans that he had full knowledge of the facts, circumstances, etc., contained in said memoir [whether *Hubert's* is not stated]. . . . The *Sieur Ragnet* contents himself with declaring, for the present, . . . that he has knowledge of these facts, and that, in case of need, and when so required, he will make a detailed and circumstantial deposition as much as he can, and that even it would be appropriate, in order to know the truth about everything, to make a judicial investigation, in which all the old inhabitants who have been vexed and ill-treated, who have knowledge of what has taken place, should be summoned to depose what they would not dare otherwise, and that it all should be done secretly before the commissioners named by the king for the purpose. . . . Also, one portion of the facts upon which the *Sieur de Ragnet* could throw light . . . about the dissipation that had been made in the revenues and goods of the king at the time *M. de Bienville* was both commissary and commandant, which will be more clearly known when he, the affirmer, shall have finished the work which the Council of the Marine, as well as the gentlemen of the Treasury, have engaged him to do,—to examine and report on all the old accounts of the Marine from the commencement of the colony to the time of its transference to New Orleans.”

This was not to be side-tracked in the secretariat, or ignored by the board of commissioners in France. The response was prompt. On the 16th of February, 1724, a letter was directed from the king, directing M. de Bienville to return to France, leaving the command of the colony to M. de la Tour until the arrival of M. de Boisbrillant from the Illinois. The news of the death of De la Tour having meanwhile reached France, another letter was written to Bienville, 1st April, 1724, directing him to remit command of the colony to Chateauguay pending the arrival of Boisbrillant, after which Chateauguay could avail himself of the permission given him by the Company to return to France. Should Chateauguay himself be in the Illinois, Bienville was to remain in command and not embark before the arrival of Boisbrillant.

With nothing but the bare compilation of official records before one, it is impossible to form other than vague conjectures as to the effect at the time of these orders upon Bienville, his friends, and the colony. The affairs of the latter since its foundation had never been in so equable and promising a condition, the colony itself never so vital with life and strength, not from distant French interfusion, but from the inherent vitality and strength, which men, like trees, grow from the soil in which they are planted. Iberville's grasp of continent had become a country; Bienville's establishment on the Mississippi, its city, its brain and nerve centre. The shadowy hopes of twenty-five years ago were becoming realities; the poignant vicissitudes, a parent's memory, from which the children's future dawned, a fair and promising morning.

Bienville, while his letters of recall were journeying to him, with the Superior Council, was holding regular sittings in New Orleans, purveying to the ever-increasing legislative needs of the growing community under their charge, recognized that the time had come to extend the ægis of the law over the accumulating population of negroes who had been, and were being, brought into the colony, with all the crude barbarity of their native wilds upon them, by the competing cupidity of alien companies. A legal mode was required for freeing those whom gratitude or affection thus commended (a by no means inconsiderable number, as statistics of the time show), and for defining and protecting the human rights which a state of slavery still allowed the others. The code of regulations, celebrated under the name of the Black Code,¹ compiled by the jurists of Louis XIV. for the island of St. Domingo, was adopted, and, with a few curtailments and alterations, promulgated in Louisiana in March, 1724. It was the last public ordinance to which Bienville attached his name before returning to France.

On the receipt of the letters, according to Dumont,

¹ "Black Code" means code for the blacks. The adverbial substitute is sometimes mistaken for an adjective, to the detriment of the code itself, its compilers, and even its promulgator, Bienville. Voltaire mentions it, with great satisfaction, as a "*jurisprudence nouvelle établie en faveur des nègres de nos colonies qui n'avaient pas encore joui des droits de l'humanité.*" A reading of its ordinances, and a comparison of them with other slave regulations, and indeed with the ordinances against Roman Catholics in the older and better-settled English colonies, would perhaps rectify the grammatical misconception alluded to.

the only recounter of it, Bienville immediately made his preparations for departure on the ship which had brought his letters of recall, took leave of his friends, went to Mobile, and thence to Dauphin Island, to await the "Bellona," which was to convey him and Chateauguay to France. The ship appeared in the roadstead before the once busy harbour; but an accident, the upsetting of her barge on its way to land, prevented embarkation, which, as it was Holy Saturday, was postponed until Easter Monday. At dawn of that day boats were sent ashore for Bienville, Chateauguay, and their luggage. Hardly had they reached land when signals for help were heard from the "Bellona,"—two cannons fired in quick succession, followed, after an interval, by two others. The weather was delightful, not a wave, not a breath of wind: in the eyes of all, the ship slowly sank under the water, the crew and passengers jumping overboard with whatever they could seize for buoys. The planks had started in her keel.

Bienville returned to New Orleans, and waited some months for another vessel, taking no part, however, in the government of Boisbrillant.

Arrived in France, he presented his justification to the minister,—the memoir of the services that had filled his life since, a mere stripling, he had followed his brother Iberville in quest of the country, for the real government of which he was now, a middle-aged man, called to account.

The services form all there is of the history of Louisiana up to this date. Somewhat may be gathered of the history of Bienville from a few extracts. The paper begins: "It is thirty-four years since the *Sieur de*

Bienville has the honour of serving the king, twenty-seven of which as lieutenant of the king and commandant of the colony."

After the *résumé* of his policy with the Indians, —

"It is not without trouble that I arrived at being absolute master of so many nations of such barbarous tempers and such different characters, almost each one of which has a particular language. One can conjecture how many difficulties I encountered and what risks I ran to lay the foundations of the colony and maintain it to the present time. Necessity, it is said, renders us industrious; but I experienced that it also renders us intrepid in danger, and makes us perform, so to speak, the impossible, in the different conjunctures in which one finds one's self confined in an unknown world with such a small force. I first applied myself to putting myself in a position to govern by myself without the aid of an interpreter. I applied myself to the language which appeared to me to be the dominant one among the savages, and of which the knowledge would facilitate me in learning the others in the end. I was fortunate enough, from the first years, to gain their confidence and their friendship. I studied, to know well their customs, so as to be able to retain them in peace with one another; so that, for the twenty-seven years during which I had the honour of commanding in the province, I was the arbiter of their differences. I always governed these nations, born in independence, so to speak, despotically, and I pushed my authority to the deposing of chiefs."

He terminates : —

"The Sieur de Bienville dares say that the establishment of the colony is due to the constancy with which he has attached himself to it for twenty-seven years, with-

out going out of it since he made the discovery of it with his brother Iberville. This attachment made him discontinue his services in the Marine, where his family was so well known. . . ."

In New Orleans, the Superior Council, through the attorney-general, summoned the *Sieur Ragnet* to sustain the deposition signed with his name and given to the curate *Raphaël*.

"The *Sieur Ragnet*," says the requisition¹ of the attorney-general, "did not appear, in consequence of which *M. de la Chaise* condemned him to pay a fine of ten livres, according to the ordinance, and resummoned him. He neither appeared in answer to this second summons, simply making answer to the clerk that he 'did not remember anything any longer,' in language and with a levity improper and unsuitable to justice, showing everywhere a contempt of and disobedience to the colony which should be repressed. As in these revelations the *Sieur Ragnet* had advanced general accusations so grave against all those who had been at the head of the colony, he should either prove them, and not affect silence and default of memory, which was his excuse, or pass for a calumniator, who, contrary to the respect due his superiors, falsely accuses them of the most horrible malversation, with the sole object of blackening them, and insinuating the most disadvantageous opinion concerning them. It was the council's duty on his [the attorney-general's] requisition, to condemn the *Sieur Ragnet* to such repara-

¹"À messieurs du Conseil Supérieur de la province de la Louisiane . . . arrêtés en la chambre du conseil le 28 août, 1725," signed *De la Chaise*, *Perrault*, *Fazende*, *Perry*. The instructions to the Superior Council in regard to the investigation are not in the compilations of official documents either of *Margry* or *Magne*.

tion, punishment, fine or prison, as they should judge proper. . . . As the *Sieur Ragnet* only excepts *M. de la Tour* from the most unworthy conduct, and as it follows, he attacks the honour, probity, fidelity, and justice of *Messrs. de Bienville, Boisbriant, Chateauguay, Hubert* [?], . . . in other words, all those who have ever acted for the Company, it is necessary that he give the explanation of the transactions [enumerated]; . . . in short, prove all that he advanced in his deposition, or be regarded as a perturber of public repose and punished as such. . . . The council was requested to revoke the *Sieur Ragnet's* commission as substitute to the attorney-general, and to ordain that he should be judged and punished as the ordinances prescribed for calumniators, according to the quality of the persons he has tried to blacken, and the gravity of the crimes imputed to them."

The *Sieur Ragnet's* commission was revoked, as prayed for by the attorney-general.

The year following, rumours being rife in the colony that the Indians were rejoicing over the recall of their old commandant, and that his reappearance there would be the signal for the breaking forth of hostilities from them, *De Noyau*, *Bienville's* nephew, made a request to the Superior Council that the *Natchez, Houmas, Tunicas*, and other tribes might give voice to their sentiments and refute so grievous a calumny against his uncle. The Superior Council acceding, these nations made their declarations intelligible through their interpreters, that they all regretted *Bienville*.

Bienville, nevertheless, was destituted, and in his ruin involved his family. *Chateauguay* was relieved of his rank; the two *De Noyaus* were broken and sent to France. *Perier* was named governor. Acting, ac-

according to his instructions, in unison with De la Chaise, who was invested as president of the council, commissioner, and secret investigator of the Company, with wellnigh unrestricted power, the disgrace of Bienville was made to involve, within a year, the disgrace of nearly every acting member of the Government. Whoever opposed the authority of De la Chaise and the council was dismissed from office, and generally sent out of the country. Boisbriant was recalled to France to give an account of his conduct. Pauger, Perry, Perrault, as members of the council, were censured; the two latter were sent to France. Fazende, another member of the council, was allowed to remain in the colony. The attorney-general resigned; his office, for the time being, was suppressed. In short, for the first time since its colonization, Louisiana was to own in its government neither member nor affiliator of the family of its founders. According to modern political parlance, a new slate, and a French one, was to be adopted and enforced.

CHAPTER XXV.

1733-1736.


AFTER his memoir to the minister, Bienville's name drops out of official mention, and his life in Paris is a blank which the imagination alone can fill. In the colony, Perier and De la Chaise carried on the government intrusted to them in the manner required: a government of thrifty despotism for absentee owners. They complain of the want of discipline in the troops and of their fondness for living *à la sauvage*, and of the general lack of religion and morality, which seems to have grieved all French officials in Louisiana; but their charge appears to have become very much tamed under their hands. The old Canadian spirit of ownership of the country, the bluster, the brag, the indifference to laws, the impudence to governors sent from France, the smuggling, the *coureurs de bois* adventures and frolics, the projects for despoiling the Spaniard and outwitting the Englishman, — there is no trace of these in the reports of the new administration. The prosperity of the colony under this spirit, that is, the agricultural development of it by patient labour, was, according to circumstantial evidence, fairly, normally progressive; the security of it was entirely fanciful.

The massacre of the entire white male population at Natchez in the later part of 1729 was not more

of a surprise to the victims than the news of it was to the Government at New Orleans. Surprise must have been the least of the sentiments experienced by the directors of the Company in France on reading Perier's despatch containing the account of it. Systematic injustice and daily petty tyrannies on the part of the French had consolidated the whole Natchez nation in enmity against them. A culminating outrage — usurpation of their territory by the officer in command, Chepart — had been the signal of revolt; the gross carelessness and blind self-confidence of the same officer had not only made the catastrophe possible, but a bloody success; and the news of a confederacy of Indians, a grand plot of general massacre, came to swell the horror of what had happened by the fear of it as imminent. The colony trembled from limit to limit. New Orleans was given over to a panic, during which a peaceful remnant of Chouachas, living above the city on the bank of the river, was massacred, and the promptitude of action that could alone re-establish the French in the eyes of their savage friends and allies was irreparably delayed.

The Choctaws were the first in the field. Seven hundred of them, under the Canadian, Le Sueur, fell upon the Natchez while they were still in the midst of their feasting and rejoicing, killing sixty of their warriors, and rescuing fifty-nine women and children and one hundred slaves who had been taken prisoners. It was February before the troops from New Orleans, seven hundred men under Soubois, arrived. The Natchez, in the mean time, had securely fortified themselves at the White Apple Village in two strong

houses, Fort Flour and well-named by the French Fort Valon. Their defence was splendid. The French opened siege with all the science of Continental warfare, — sappers, miners, cannon ; but, from the first, they were hopelessly overmatched in every soldierly qualification by their savage foes. Their elaborate explanations of their discomfiture are but a series of humiliated apologies. Perier accuses the French soldiers of cowardice, — says they were intimidated. He compliments, however, the courage of the colonists, particularly of the Creoles. Fifteen negro volunteers, he wrote, behaved with inconceivable valour. The honours of the campaign, however, all agreed, rested with the Choctaws. They, at least, had the merit of terminating it. Waiting in vain, after several days' cannonading, for the French to make a promised breach in one of the forts, and suffering the spectacle of thirty Frenchmen running from their trench before a sortie of the Natchez, the Choctaws opened a parley with Fort Flour. Alabama Mingo, one of their most famous chiefs, made a speech to the obstinate foes, in which he convinced them that although the French could not fight them, they and the Choctaws were sufficient in numbers, and possessed patience enough, to blockade them, and force them into surrendering through starvation. The Natchez made their terms : they to surrender to the Choctaws the remainder of their French women, children, and negro prisoners ; the French to evacuate their position, and, with their guns, retire to the bank of the river, — which was executed on the 26th of February. On the nights of the 28th and 29th of February, the Natchez secretly



made their escape from the forts, eluding even the pursuit of the French. With their allies, the Yazous, some of them sought refuge with the Chickasaws. The others, crossing the river, made their way forty miles westward through forest and swamp, to, no doubt, a traditional refuge and resting-place in the legendary migration of their people from the East,¹—an imposing mound-surrounded tumulus in the present parish of Catahoula, just above the juncture of Little River with the Ouachita. It was a vantage-ground for attack upon the Tunicas, and ambushing of travellers upon the Mississippi, of which the now vindictive warriors availed themselves, to the bloody cost of the colony. Here they remained until tidings reached them (Jan. 3, 1731) of the great armament of white men and Indians, led by Perier, close upon their track. They withdrew to a far stronger military position,—to a thirty-foot high bluff on the eastern end of a plateau known now as Licity Island,² situated at the southwest extremity of a small lake (Lake Lovelace). Here they intrenched themselves.

According to his own statement, it took Perier and twenty different scouting-parties nine months to locate

¹ "Mississippi as Province, Territory, and State" (I. F. H. Claiborne, Jackson, Miss., 1880),—an invaluable work to the student of the history of the "Gulf States," from which these details are taken almost verbally.

² Claiborne, in locating "the last stand of the Natchez," quotes from papers by D. W. Tallafiero, Esq., and Dr. Kilpatrick, of Catahoula parish, and T. O. S. Doniphan, of Natchez, whose careful personal investigations of the subject fix the correctness of Claiborne's position, and the incorrectness of Monette's.

his enemies ; to arrive, with his thousand men, through the, to them, intricate country, up the bluff, and plant his mortars in front of their earthworks, was the most heroic part of his campaign.

The Natchez, as before, held their own, and defended themselves gallantly four days, until they brought about a parley, for which, after a two days' rain "by bucketfuls," the French could not conceal their eagerness. Perier refused to treat with any but the chiefs. Two Suns and the great warrior who had defended the Flour Fort presented themselves. Perier demanded the surrender of the negro prisoners still in their possession. This was acceded to. He then offered to spare the lives of all the Natchez, men, women, and children, who delivered themselves up to him the next day. The ambassadors then, in a manner that Perier does not explain, became prisoners. He complains that the great warrior of the Flour Fort made his escape from the tent where he was guarded by twelve of his most alert men, white and Indians. The next day, four hundred and fifty women and children, and forty-five men, left the Natchez fortifications, and ranged themselves inside those of the French ; but they came in such small groups that the whole day was consumed in the transaction. Seventy still remained in their fort, asking a delay until the morrow. It was raining still in torrents. Between the water under foot and water overhead, not being able to take them, Perier says he was forced to consent. At nine o'clock at night the weather cleared. The Natchez forts were then found deserted. Again the great fighting bulk of the nation, under the leadership of the redoubtable warrior of the

Flour Fort, had given the slip to their captors. The stronghold was destroyed the next day, and two prisoners taken were scalped and burned. Perier returned to New Orleans with his trophies of women and children, the two Suns, and forty men, all of whom he sold into slavery in St. Domingo.

Upon receipt of the intelligence of the Natchez disaster, with the great loss of property involved, and foreseeing a war, in addition to their other overwhelming expenses in the colony, the Company of the Indies obtained the retrocession of their charter to the king, Jan. 23, 1731.

The Ministry of Marine in taking possession of their old burden may have followed individual convictions, or they may have sought perhaps in their memory for the conditions which in the past had made it most tolerable. Their memory may have been aided by personal solicitation of the old Canadian clique, assembled, thanks to the Superior Council of Louisiana, in the effective ministerial centre of Paris; a visit of Diron d'Artauguette to France about the time may have furnished the decisive counsel which resulted in the re-establishment of Bienville to his former position and the practical refutation of his accusers, and the rehabilitation of himself and policy by the royal government. The archives preserve some reclamations which had been made from time to time, — a memoir by a M. Dodun, 1726. "If it is desired to save the country, which is in the greatest danger, it is indispensably necessary to send back the Sieurs de Bienville and Chateauguay;" it stated that the Sieur de Bienville had been displaced by a cabal, in spite of M. Dodun, who could not get them, being so abject,

to say what they had reproached him with. Knowing Bienville's long services and merit, M. Dodun had given his testimony of them before M. le Duc (?), who had sent it to M. de Maurepas. M. Dodun had also made a report to the king.

Out of the fulness of an ecclesiastical wrangle, 1728, radiate a few beams of local light upon the subject. When Louisiana in 1722 was divided into three spiritual districts, the Bishop of Quebec assigned them, — Mobile to the Carmelites, New Orleans to the Capuchins, and the Illinois to the Jesuits. The Jesuits, however, had obtained a residence in New Orleans upon the promise to exercise no spiritual function without consent of the Capuchins. Far from keeping this promise, according to the Capuchins, the Rev. Father Beaubois, S. J., arrived from France with a number of missionaries, and commenced a systematic infringement of it, had himself made director of the Convent of the Ursulines, and otherwise so alarmed the Capuchins by his arrogation of dominion that they prayed the council for an ordinance against him and the Bishop of Canada for his recall. Among other charges, they specify "that Father Beaubois affected a close intimacy with every one in the colony with whom the Company had reason to be dissatisfied. . . . It was at his house they assembled, voluntarily hearing mass only in his chapel, which they qualified as the chapel of honest folk. The Jesuit, little restrained in his talk, would launch even in public against those who were not of his party, and would participate in raillery not very decent against the Capuchins and their Superior."

The Jesuit answers the charges *seriatim*, ranging the

complaints made against him under four heads ; to the second of which, that he was an unquiet, quarrelsome man, he makes answer "That it had been written to France that he was devoted to Bienville, and was rousing the colony to have him recalled. He acknowledged that he was very much attached to M. de Bienville, and that he had even wished his return to the colony as long as he believed the return possible. . . . Some persons in the colony had never been able to pardon him that he had been such a friend of M. de Bienville, this officer having become the object of such implacable hatred that it had become extended even to his relations and friends." There was pique because Father Beaubois had bought one of his plantations. In November, 1731, M. de Beauchamp, commandant at Mobile, giving the disgusting facts of the condition of the colony, — the harassing guerilla warfare of the Natchez up and down the river ; the threatening attitude of the Chickasaws ; the Alabamas on the point of declaring war against the Choctaws ; the insurrection of the negroes ; Perier's barbarous punishment of them, and his cruel reprisals against the savages, — concludes with the sensible criticism on the governor's past course, —

" One fault of policy, which I and all the old settlers find in M. Perier, is that he has given a perfect knowledge to the Choctaws of the forces of the colony, by obliging them to come to New Orleans for their presents ; so that to-day there are three times as many chiefs in New Orleans than when M. de Bienville went away, and consequently three times as many presents to make. In addition, these savages, who, being woodsmen, had never dared risk themselves on the water, have become boatmen, and so qualified to make war upon us in any part of the colony. That is

the reason for which M. de Bienville never suffered the Choctaws to come for their presents either at Biloxi, or New Orleans, to keep from them all knowledge of his troops and supplies, always remitting the presents to Mobile, which is nearer to them. The evil is *now* beyond remedy, unless M. de Bienville could return."

Stopping at Cape François on his way to Louisiana, January, 1733, Bienville had an interview with the enslaved Natchez chiefs. They assured him, he wrote to the minister, that their tribe only was implicated in the revolt, and that they had been driven to it by hard treatment, without having taken counsel of the other tribes.¹ Perier, 6th March, 1733, announces his successor's arrival to the minister, and gives the account of it which is historical only in the serious acceptance of it by some authorities in judging Bienville's character.² He says in substance: As soon as Bienville had set foot on land he remitted the government to him, although the day before, Bienville had paid him the "most insulting compliment in the world," by the Sieur de Macarty, aide-major of New Orleans, for which he, Perier, demanded justice. Macarty came to him drunk, and told him if he did not dislodge at once, according to the order given by Bienville, he would have all his furniture thrown into the street. The next day Perier, who attributed the indignity and the low conduct to the state of the messenger, heard it excused by Bienville. Perier remarked to the latter that such manners were not very proper towards a gallant man, no matter if he were not in office,

¹ Margry, Introduction to sixth volume, — and all those who have followed his opinions without seeking their base.

² Margry's compilation.

and that it was a pity he was so lacking to himself in being lacking to him (Perier), — adding that it was not very just gratitude for the very different conduct shown by Perier on his arrival, when he had taken Bienville and family under his protection, although they were held in such horror, and at the head of the troops had forbidden evil speaking of him, under penalty of punishment.

One can but remember here the apparent entire destitution of Bienville and his family at the period cited. The account proceeds : —

“ Bienville, no doubt repenting of this proceeding, sent and asked the orders of Perier, when he was admitted to the council; but Perier declared to Salmon that he would have nothing to do with such a man. When Bienville arrived, he had gone to meet him on the bank of the river, having all the honours rendered him which accompany this kind of reception, — that is, firing of cannon, and troops under arms. The cabal of the *Sieur de Bienville*, who had laboured to make him, Perier, pass for a violent man, and not master of his movements, would be very glad if they could tell Perier what they had seen and heard their chief do. Bienville, in spite of the order of the king, which he disregards in a manner to convince one of his impertinence and ignorance, refused to be received at the head of the troops, saying that it was sufficient to be received in the council.”

Bienville took up his residence again in his old hôtel thus summarily vacated. It was situated in the space now bounded by Chartres, Decatur, Bienville, and Custom-House Streets. The Ursuline nuns occupied it temporarily on their arrival in 1728, while they were awaiting the construction of their convent; and one of them, the

young and vivacious Madeline Hachard, describes it in one of her letters to her father as "The finest house in the town. It is a two-story building, with an attic, . . . with six doors in the first story for egress and ingress. In all the stories there are large windows, but with no glass. The frames are closed with very thin linen, admitting of as much light as glass." The same facile pen gives also a sketch of Bienville's city, — a pleasanter one than those usually quoted :—

"Our town is very handsome, well constructed, and regularly built, as much as I could judge on the day of our arrival; for ever since that day we have remained cloistered in our dwelling. . . . The streets are large and straight; . . . the houses are well built, with upright joists, filled with mortar between the interstices, and the exterior white-washed with slack lime. In the interior they are wainscoted. . . . The colonists are very proud of their capital. Suffice it to say that there is a song currently sung here which emphatically declares that New Orleans is as beautiful as Paris. Beyond that it is impossible to go. . . . The women here are extremely ignorant as to the means of securing their salvation, but they are very expert in the art of displaying their beauty. There is so much luxury in this town that there is no distinction among the classes so far as dress goes. The magnificence of display is equal in all. Most of them reduce themselves and their family to the hard lot of living at home on nothing but sagamity, and flaunt abroad in robes of velvet and damask, ornamented with the most costly ribbons. The women here paint and rouge to hide the ravages of time, and wear on their faces, as embellishment, small black patches."

While the ex-governor was making his doleances to the minister, the governor, according to his and Salmon's

correspondence of the spring and summer (1733), was putting his hand to his work. He could arrive at no accurate estimate of the strength of the Natchez, but through his Indian allies he established the fact of three divisions of them, — one in the interior of their territory, an impracticable country above their old villages; another, and a larger one, in the neighbourhood of the Ouachitas, on the Yazoo River; the third and largest body near the Chickasaws, who had given them land for a new village. In case the Chickasaws could not be brought to terms, and their guests, the Natchez, exterminated, as now French security and prestige demanded, he passed in review his more distant and powerful Indian allies, whose dispositions he had been able to sound. The Illinois were uncertain, as were also the Wabash, Arkansas, and Osages. The Natchitoches had recently made an attempt to revolt against the French. The Choctaws, the main reliance in a war against the Chickasaws, offered no guarantee of loyalty, except the occasional killing and plundering of English traders; and under the recent short-sighted administration, as De Beauchamp had written, abuses had crept in which made the nations more difficult than ever to manipulate. The chiefs had multiplied themselves to one hundred and eleven, each one of which had separately to be treated with and ballasted with presents; all were arrogant and insolent, and most of them in treaty with the English of Carolina. In short, while small parties of Choctaws could be kept on the war-path, nothing could be hoped from them as a nation without the preliminary long, tiresome processes of Indian negotiations, — processes which, in fact, did consume the entire year of

1731. As for the soldiers, without barracks, bedding, and clothing, no steps could be taken towards the disciplining of them for service until the government's neglect of them had been repaired.

In the ecclesiastical matters of the parish, which was still in a flourishing state of discord, the governor was barely installed before the Capuchin Superior, the curate of the city, Father Raphael de Luxembourg, came (perhaps as a test) to consult him and Salmon about the order received from the Bishop of Quebec to interdict the Jesuits in New Orleans and its neighbourhood. Bienville writes to the minister that he and Salmon, not wishing to enter into the matter, had answered that the curate should know better than they what to do, but that it was a delicate step for religion. Making some defence for the order of his friend Beaubois, he added that the Jesuits had gained general esteem by their good conduct, and were doing much in the service of religion ; that the Capuchins could not administer to the whole parish, which was extensive, comprising also the hospital and nunnery. Besides, the nuns did not wish to submit to the order of the Bishop of Canada and receive a Capuchin for director. This condemnation was not meant to touch Father Raphael, a respectable man by his learning and morals, but Father Hyacinth, "whose conduct was so licentious that he was despised even by the libertines." Bienville had learned, however, that Father Raphael had forbidden the nuns to have any communication with the Jesuits, who in two days were to be laid under general interdict. Beaubois seemed to be the sole object of the hatred felt by the Bishop of Canada against the whole society ; nevertheless, every

one agreed that he gave no cause for it, — Salmon in particular, since the Jesuits' return, had not remarked anything reprehensible in their morals, which were regular and edifying.

The following autumn the governor related a chafing of the spiritual and civil authorities. This time one of the captains of the garrison determined to marry a young girl, and not being able to obtain the permission of Perier or Bienville, the couple had gone to Pensacola, where, for money, the Spanish Franciscan had married them. The officer being ordered up to the Illinois, and the rumour getting abroad that he intended taking his wife with him, the New Orleans priests presented a requisition to Bienville to prevent the lady from going with her husband, or to oblige the officer to remove the opposition to his marriage. The officer and the Superior of the Capuchins were summoned before the council, and the latter was requested to make known the foundation of his opposition to the marriage, which, after hearing, the council pronounced of no effect. But as the Capuchin proclaimed anew that the marriage was sacrilegious, clandestine, and not according to law, forbidding the parties to live together under pain of major excommunication, enjoining penances, fasts, etc., — Bienville, not to leave the position of the lady uncertain, had closed his eyes to her departure to the Illinois with the officer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1736.


As Bienville wrote of himself to the Minister of Marine, February 10, 1736, his letters for two years seem full of contradictions about the measures necessary to finish the Natchez war and frustrate the English intrigues with the Choctaws. His own intrigues with the Chickasaws met with as careful frustration by the English. After two years' negotiations, conducted with all the skill and judgment with which nature and experience had furnished him, the Chickasaws still refused to abandon the refugee Natchez to him for punishment.

In the correspondence alluded to, there is an evident reluctance to come to the armed issue which the failure of diplomacy made the more necessary to maintain the French supremacy in the eyes of the savages, and his careful precautions evince an apprehensive consciousness in his mind of the merit and strength of his foes. There is an apprehensive consciousness also, not only of the fighting inferiority of his allies, the Choctaws, but of their loyalty. Under his patient and persistent incitements, they had kept war-parties in the field against the Chickasaws, and had committed themselves by isolated acts of brigandage against the English; but the nation was divided in sentiment, and all his efforts to solidify

it in a consistent condition of warfare had met with disappointment. With superhuman patience he resumed over and over again his manipulation of the two tricky Choctaw chiefs, Red Shoe and Alabama Mingo, to arrive at the but partial conviction in his own mind of their reliability when the call for support should be made upon them. His temporizing policy with the Choctaws produced a difference of opinion between him and D'Artaguet, who frankly distrusted them; the difference increased to an estrangement, which, as Bienville adhered none the less inflexibly to his views, transformed the friend into a criticising opponent and unwilling subordinate.

Bienville's plan of campaign was one in which, he wrote to the minister, he thought he had employed every imaginable means for success. It was to penetrate by the Tombigbee into the Chickasaw country, where he was to be joined by D'Artaguet (brother of Diron), commandant at the Illinois, with a force of about three hundred good men. The orders were sent to D'Artaguet, fixing the place of meeting, — Ecores à Prudhomme (Jones's Bluff), on the Tombigbee, four days' journey from the Chickasaw villages. The time was placed between the 10th and 15th of March.

Bienville during the summer took up his position at Mobile, where, in a grand council, he exposed his plans to the Choctaw chiefs, and secured their willing and, as he judged, reliable co-operation. Salmon, in New Orleans, undertook to forward the troops and provisions to him. But the means of transportation to be furnished by the middle of October were not ready by the middle of January. Sending a detachment in advance with



everything necessary to make an establishment and construct accommodations at the junction of the Mobile and Tombigbee as a resting-place for the army, Bienville, despite the rigours of the season, crossed the Gulf and hastened to New Orleans, where he personally pushed forward the belated preparations. He sent a courier to D'Artaguet to retard his march until the last of April ; and as fast as pirogues and flat-boats were finished, drawing what could be spared from the garrisons of Natchez, Natchitoches, and Mobile, and raising a company of volunteers among the young men and *voyageurs* in the city, and another among the unmarried colonists, embarked them for Mobile, he himself returning there on the 4th March, leaving De Noyau to bring on the four companies still waiting for boats.

The royal vessel, by which the mortars for the expedition were expected, did not arrive in Mobile until the end of February ; and then it was found that by what Bienville calls some deplorable negligence, the cannon had not been shipped. The expedition had to go without them. Contrary winds retarded De Noyau and his soldiers until March 22d, and in the rough weather one of the large boats of provision, lost half her cargo of rice. This necessitated another delay for the making of bread in Mobile, and bakers were sent up to the establishment on the Tombigbee, with orders to turn into biscuit all the flour on hand there. Finally, however, every misadventure having been, as far as humanly possible, remedied, the start was made on the 1st of April. The armament made a grand and notable show on the Mobile, — five hundred soldiers, without counting the brilliant staff of officers, and forty-five blacks, commanded

by free negroes, rowing up the river in the early morning sun, in thirty pirogues, followed by thirty flat-boats.

With continued heavy rains and the current against them, it took twenty-three days to arrive at the Tombigbee juncture. Here it was found that the commandant had been able to construct but one working furnace, the fat earth of the region not hardening in fire. Bienville put his men to work. By mixing sand and slime, they managed to construct three others ; but all together could only provide a baking for three days in advance.

The Choctaw chiefs, justifying Bienville's judgment of them, began to arrive ; Alabama Mingo among the first, Soulier Rouge among the last comers. A day was given up to receiving them. Each chief, Bienville says, began his harangue with protestations of fidelity, and ended with demands for ammunition, vermilion, and provisions. The two former were given, but Bienville reminded them of his warning to them in Mobile to fetch their own provisions. They related that some of the warriors had been turned back, after they had set out, by a rumour that when the two French armies met, the Choctaws were to be destroyed, and peace made with the Chickasaws. Bienville immediately sent one of his most trusted young Canadians to reassure the suspicious warriors and induce them to join the expedition. Writing these details at the camp on the Tombigbee, May 2, 1736, Bienville mentions, — with little suspicion of the correctness of his prescience, —

“ Several war-parties, who have brought scalps to me, told me of having seen great roads, which make them believe that help has been sent to the Chickasaws by the English.

I think rather that it is M. d'Artaguet, who, hurried by the savages, has arrived before me, and did not wish to return without striking a blow."

On the 1st of May, all the chiefs having arrived, a grand consultation was held; it was agreed that the Choctaw forces should meet the French in fourteen days at the little creek which separated the Chickasaw and Choctaw territories, whence the united army would march against the enemy. The chiefs then took their departure, and the French re-embarked for the last stage of their journey by boat. By the 22d of the month, all arrived at the landing-place, — some nine leagues above the Chickasaw villages. Bienville remarked that the Choctaws had not rallied in as great numbers as promised; all together not numbering over six hundred men. A small fortification (Fort Oltibia) was thrown up to protect the boats and provisions, and a garrison of twenty men, with the boatmen, store-keepers, and sick, were left in charge. After a distribution of twelve days' provisions and ammunition, the army was put in motion on the 24th, marching in Indian file, in two columns, through the woods, with the Indians on either flank. The bad weather still pursued them; during the first camp a terrible storm, which returned several times during the night, threatened ruin to both ammunition and provisions. The next day there were three deep ravines to pass, filled with water waist high, the sides closed with impenetrable canebrakes; but after this, they came to a most beautiful prairie, and camped about two leagues from the Chickasaw villages.

Neither Choctaws nor French could conceal their

want of confidence in one another. Soulier Rouge wishing to reconnoitre with some of his men, Bienville, fearing an evil turn from him, had him accompanied by some Canadians. As the party did not return that night, and several shots being heard, the report again spread among the Choctaws that the whole expedition was a stratagem to deliver them up to the Chickasaws. Foolish as the report was, the Choctaws were on the point of abandoning the French when the reconnoitring appeared.

Tranquillity being restored and the march resumed, the great chief of the Choctaws at the first halt asked Bienville which village he intended attacking first. Bienville told him the Natchez, as they were the authors of the war. The great chief then represented that the first village, Schiouakafalay, was the nearest of the Chickasaw villages to the Choctaws, and did them most harm, and that he would like to attack that first, particularly as it was filled with provisions which the Choctaws needed, and without which they could not follow the French any more. Hardly doubting, Bienville relates, but that the Choctaws would return home after taking this first village, their habit being to fly after they had struck the first blow, he persuaded them to attack the Natchez village first, promising to return and take the Schiouakafalay afterwards. They appeared satisfied, and their guides, leading the army through the woods, as if to conduct it to the point agreed upon, came to a small prairie about a league in extent, in the middle of which were three villages placed triangularly on the crest of a ridge, at the foot of which flowed a brook almost dry. This little prairie was only a league distant from the


large prairie where were most of the Chickasaw villages. A small forest separated them. The Choctaws maintaining that no water could be found farther on, Bienville defiled his army the length of the woods that skirted the prairie and gained a little eminence, where a halt was made for dinner. It was a little past midday, and the men as they marched stooped to pluck the wild strawberries that covered the earth, thick and luscious under their feet.

The Choctaws, who had gained their point by a ruse, hastened to complete the trick by precipitating an action. While the army was defiling through the woods, a party of three, with war-cries and yells, began shooting and skirmishing around the first village, and succeeded in drawing its defensive fires upon the French. The French officers then joined their demands to the Choctaws that this first village, which they did not think was good for much resistance, should be at once taken. Pressed on all sides, Bienville explains, not to leave these strongholds behind the army, and not being able to refuse without rebuffing the Choctaws, he gave his consent to the attack, after making the chiefs promise to accompany him to the Natchez after the taking of the villages, — which promise they gave, with many protestations and reiterations. A company of grenadiers, a detachment of fifteen men from each of the eight French companies, sixty Swiss, and forty-five volunteers under De Noyau, were commanded to be in readiness by two o'clock for the attack.

From the height where the French were, four or five Englishmen could be discerned, bustling around among the excited Chickasaws, and over one village floated the

English flag. The French battalion moved out of the woods, crossed the brook, and began to ascend the ridge. A murderous fire poured upon them from three directions. One of the negro bearers, carrying mantelets in front, was killed. The rest threw down their burdens and fled. The column of grenadiers, first attaining the summit and the entrance of the village, met the full force of the hidden batteries about them. Two or three fortified cabins were taken and burned ; but when it came to crossing the open space between them and the next cabins, under the same fire, the Chevalier de Noyau, looking about him, saw only a few officers, a remnant of grenadiers, and about a dozen volunteers. The soldiers, hopeless at fighting an enemy whom they could not draw out, sought shelter from the range of their loopholes. Crowding behind the captured cabins, they refused to be driven out by their sergeants. Almost all the officers were killed or wounded. The Chevalier de Noyau and four officers fell wounded at the same moment. In vain De Noyau sent his aide to rally the soldiers ; the killing of the aide among them, only added to their panic. He finally got a message to Bienville, that unless assistance were sent, or retreat sounded, not an officer would be left alive.

Upon this report, and viewing from the point where he was the combat, and the conduct of the French and Swiss soldiers, and with a sudden alarm in the camp that a reinforcement from the Chickasaws of the great prairie beyond, were approaching, Bienville sent a company of eighty men to protect the retreat and fetch off the wounded, which they did not accomplish without serious loss. The officers, massed together, were




found still fighting and holding their own. The Choctaws, who had been keeping themselves under cover under the side of the hill, then, says Bienville, raised themselves up, and made several discharges of their firearms ; but they also lost twenty-two men killed and wounded, which discouraged and disgusted them not a little.

The night was passed in felling trees, and, with hasty fortifications, assuring the camp against surprise. It seems hardly doubtful that if the Chickasaws had followed up the prestige of their defence with an assault, they would have made a bloody end of the whole French army. But the savages, either from their own or the English counsels, stood secure, silent, invisible, alert, in their strongholds, leaving the French to take what initiative they chose, after their lesson. As Bienville experienced cruelly, there was no choice. The great number of his wounded ; the scarcity of provisions, he having been forced, after all, to feed the Choctaws, to hold them ; the fear that the Choctaws might abandon him at any moment, — made retreat a necessity, and a quick one an urgent necessity. For in addition to other apprehensions, the falling of the Tombigbee came to threaten the cutting off of his water transportation. A retreat by land, harassed at every covert by Chickasaws and Natchez, would convert the present repulse into an irremediable disaster.

As for resuming an attack upon the Chickasaw villages without cannon, he dismissed any such alternative by simply sending a plan of the villages to the minister and describing the system of fortifications used by these savages : —

"After having surrounded their cabins with several rows of great pieux (filled with earth), they hollow out the earth inside, until they can let themselves down in it, shoulder-deep, and shoot through loopholes almost level with the ground; but they obtain still more advantage from the natural situation of their cabins, which are separated one from the other, so that their fires cross, than from all the arts of fortifying them that the English can suggest. The coverings of the cabins are a thatching of wood and mud, proof against fire-arrows and grenades; nothing but bombs could damage them."

Litters were made for the wounded; and at the hour at which they arrived the day before, and in the same manner, in two columns, the army withdrew. The tired soldiers, having had no rest during the night, loaded with their baggage and carrying their wounded, marched slowly, — which completed the disgust of the Choctaws. Soulier Rouge exerted himself to the utmost to get his people to abandon the French then and there; but the Great Chief and Bienville were able to frustrate him. To hasten the march, Bienville proposed that they should assist in carrying the wounded; and after many difficulties, obtained that each village should take charge of one man. The Oltibia and the boats were reached in two days; the water was so low that in many places a passage had to be cut through the bottom for the boats. On the 2d of June all arrived at the Tombigbee. The wounded, with the surgeons, were hurried on to Mobile. Bienville followed after. From the Tohomes he received the first intelligence of the full extent of his disaster, which Diron d'Artaguet, mad with grief and resentment over the useless sacrifice of his brother, more than confirmed.



It was indeed a useless, a most deplorable, sacrifice, and a misfortune from which Bienville never recovered. His surmise about D'Artaguet was only too true. The young commandant, as a letter awaiting Bienville in Mobile announced, following his first instructions, had set out from the Illinois with his force of one hundred and forty white men and two hundred and sixty-six Indians, — Iroquois, Arkansas, Miamis, and Illinois, — to reach the rendezvous early in March, marching slowly, that some delayed reinforcements from the Michiganicas and Arkansas, under the Sieur de Montcherval, might overtake him. Arrived at the Chickasaw Bluffs, his scouts could discover no signs or traces of Bienville's army. The next day a courier from the Illinois appeared with Bienville's letter and change of plan. He immediately called a council of war of his officers and the Indian chiefs. The latter advised striking a blow immediately, as the Indians, not having provisions enough to remain long in campaign, would be forced to quit; adding that their scouts reported in the large prairie a small village of thirty cabins, separated from all the rest, which could be easily taken; they would undoubtedly find it full of provisions, which would enable them to wait for Bienville under the protection of the fortifications they could throw around the place. Almost all the officers seconding this advice, the attack upon the village was decided. Their march to the prairie was pushed forward with rapidity and, as they supposed, without being discovered. Arrived within a quarter of a league of the great prairie, — it was Palm Sunday, — the baggage was left under a guard of thirty men, and the rest of the army confidently took the road to the village. It

was the road to certain death to all but two of them. Hardly had the attack upon the village begun, when D'Artaguettes saw a troop of from four to five hundred savages issue from behind a neighboring hill, and bear down upon him with such rapidity and force that his Indians, the Miamis and Illinois, the greater part of his army, took to flight. He turned to gain the road to his baggage, to save or at least blow up his powder, fighting desperately, step by step, he, his officers, men, and the sixty-six Iroquois and Arkansas, — all his Indians who stood by him. Nineteen were taken alive, among them D'Artaguettes, — desperately wounded in three places, — two officers, and Father Senac, a Jesuit priest.

Two days' journey from the prairie, the advancing reinforcement, under Montcherval, met the flying *débris* of the baggage guard. With them he turned back to the Illinois, sending a courier to acquaint Bienville with the catastrophe. The courier, as has been seen, never reached him. Provided abundantly with ammunition, warned through the papers found on D'Artaguettes (read to them by the English traders) of Bienville's plans, the Chickasaws had abundant time, with their English friends, to take their measures of defence; and, as has been seen, they took them well. As Bienville said, it was not astonishing that he found the preparation that destroyed his combinations; for he had counted upon having to do with savages, brave in truth, but incapable of fortifying themselves as they had done to the degree that it was impossible to fight them without artillery.

An Avoyelles woman slave who escaped from the Chickasaws to the Alabamas some time afterwards, related the unfortunate fate of the prisoners. The after-

noon of the engagement two were put aside, to exchange for a Chickasaw warrior in the hands of the French. The remaining seventeen were divided into two lots, and burned in two huge fires prepared by the Chickasaw women. All died heroically, — one Frenchman, so it has come down to us, singing his death-song to the last, like an Indian brave.


Bienville effected the exchange of the two survivors. Save these, he could not obtain further details of the affair, which, as above, he related to the minister. All agreed, he said, that but for the courage of the Iroquois and Arkansas, not a Frenchman would have survived the expedition.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1737-1740.

THERE was no interest so important now in the colony as restoring the lost prestige of the French, and diminishing the effects of the triumph of the Chickasaws in the country. Bienville had no sooner got back to New Orleans than he commenced his preparations for another campaign, — preparations based on his recent new knowledge of the Chickasaws, and on other misconceptions. He wrote to the minister for artillery and bombs, to break in the roofs of the forts, and for soldiers; for to fight with those he had, was, he said, to compromise the reputation of the nation, and force his officers into the necessity of dishonour or getting themselves killed. Of the last recruits sent, there were not more than one or two over five feet in height, — the rest were below four feet ten; and as for their morale, more than half had passed under the lash for theft.

He sent two engineers, Devergé and Brontin, to explore the shortest and best routes into the Chickasaw country, — the one by the Mississippi, the other by the Mobile, River. He wrote to M. de Beauharnais to secure the reinforcement of a company of Canadians, and, travelling incessantly from the capital to Mobile, he prosecuted his work of holding the Choc-



taw chiefs firm and solid to him; and despite the machinations of the English and the treacheries of Soulier Rouge, for the three years during which his preparations lasted, he kept war-parties, both of Choc-taws and Illinois, in the field, destroying the Chick-asaw crops, intercepting their English supplies, and harassing them into that state of discouraging disquietude which, although not a brilliant, was the most effective, warfare against the volatile savage nature. His despatches to the minister contain, nevertheless, some indications of other preoccupations and responsibilities, — the changes in the bar at the Balize and the mouth of the river, his past experiments to keep a permanent passage open, and his suggestion of a vessel which could be sunk or lightened by pumps, to be kept travelling backwards and forwards, hollowing out a furrow with her keel.

A humble sailor dying (1739) and leaving his savings to found a hospital (the present Charity Hospital of New Orleans), a building had to be bought, repaired, and furnished, and a residue of the money kept for future use. There were also to be met the financial complications brought about by the different emissions of paper, card, and metal currency, with the attendant miseries of speculation and usury. There was, as ever, high water, overflows, destruction of crops, sickness, food-scarcity, discouragement of colonists, discontent and desertion of soldiers; but the machinery of government, in the absorption elsewhere of individual energies and efforts, seemed to roll along, for once, by its own impetus over the calamities of nature.

In the spring of 1738 the engineers returned with

the results of their explorations in reports and maps. The Chickasaws, according to them, lay at about equal distances from the Mobile and the Mississippi. Devergé's route, by the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers, was selected by Bienville, on account of a recent peace between the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, although, as Devergé complained to the minister, the correctness of both his map and report was doubted. Officers, engineers, and a detachment of soldiers were sent up the Mississippi to build a fort and depot for provisions at the mouth of the St. Francis River, and another (on the opposite bank) at the mouth of the Margot (Wolf River), which was to be the rendezvous for the forces from North, West, and South. Two hundred horses were sent from New Orleans, and two hundred ordered from Natchitoches to the Illinois for the transportation of the provisions, which, in default of Louisiana crops, were to be drawn from the abundant fields of the West. The rest of 1738 was passed in making preparations for the campaign. In June, 1739, the assistance demanded from the Home Government was sent out, — arms, munitions, provisions, merchandise, with a reinforcement of seven hundred soldiers, including bombardiers, cannoniers, and miners, under the *Sieur de Noailles d'Aime*. This officer was also instructed to take command of all the troops, regular and militia, in the colony during the approaching expedition, and Bienville was recommended to act in concert with him, as with one "who had all the talents and experience necessary for the command."

This, however, was to be one of those commands for which there was no computing the necessary talents and

experience. One of De Noailles d'Aime's young officers kept a journal,¹ which reveals one of the difficulties of this war with the Chickasaws. By the time his troops reached New Orleans, thirty, stricken with scurvy, had to be put in the hospital on the opposite side of the river, and twenty in the City Hospital. In fifteen days the number had increased to eighty-four. By July 25, sixty having died, and the sick list mounting to one hundred and forty, and others falling sick every day, the first convoy was hurried out of the city, three companies, reduced from fifty men to forty-one each. Another convoy of one hundred and twenty-eight men were started off on the 8th of August. Of these, four officers and fifteen privates had to be landed sick at Schoupitoulas, a few miles above the city. Four days afterwards, one officer and four men died. The rest of the battalion, which the journalist accompanied, left the city in September, having suffered a loss of seventy men dead and seventy-four on the sick list. They reached Fort Assumption, as the new establishment was called, on October 3, with sixteen men too ill to rise; eight had been buried on the way, and forty-five left behind at Natchez.

Bienville left New Orleans also in September, but making a *détour* to invite the Arkansas to join the expedition, did not reach Fort Assumption until the middle of November. He carried with him sixteen hundred Indians and the rest of the colonial troops. He found his reinforcements from the Illinois and Canada waiting for him, — the former under De la Buissonnière, the successor of D'Artaguet; the latter, a company of Mon-

¹ Claiborne's History of Mississippi.

treail and Quebec cadets, and three hundred Northern savages under the *Sieur de Longueuil*, constituting, with his own force, the respectable army, for the time, of twelve hundred white men and two thousand four hundred savages. The young French officer gives a graphic description of the encampment, — the French disciplined soldiers, the turbulent Canadians, the negro servants, the savages, with their interchanges of feasting, ceremonies, harangues ; their war-parties, scalps, and prisoners, whom the missionaries made efforts to save, but who nevertheless were burned, with more than usual horrible cruelties ; and as time passed, and the great expedition promised was not forthcoming, their dissatisfaction, discontent, and desertion by large bodies ; with *Bienville* arranging and consulting with his officers, pacifying his Canadians, and unweariedly performing all the etiquette of ceremony, speech, and calumet required by the exigencies of savage alliances.

Bienville's own account to the minister gives a no less graphic, if a less picturesque, view of the situation he found himself in at Fort Assumption.

As he had suspected, and as *Devergé* had been forced to acknowledge, the latter had been incorrect in both map and report. The distance of the Chickasaw villages from the Mississippi was found to be as much again as he had computed. A new survey was made for a road, which was found, upon *Bienville's* examination, to be impracticable from overflow of small streams swollen by rains. *De Noyau* indicated a route over higher lands. Another survey was made, and it was found possible to open a road traversable by the artillery and wagons ; relays of men were put to work upon it.

Three months were thus consumed ! In addition, the rains, which had rendered the first road impracticable, had so filled up the bottoms which the live-stock had to cross, in coming from St. Francis to Fort Assumption, that in eight days more than half were lost, and the rest, eighty beeves and thirty-four horses, arrived in such a state of exhaustion that there was no hope of getting any service out of them. The only resources, therefore, were the hundred and fifty horses and hundred oxen bought by Bienville and Salmon at Natchitoches, which were to be delivered on the 1st September, but of which no news had been heard. At the end of January it was learned that the oxen had wandered off and become lost seventy miles from Natchez, and that the horses that had not perished on the road, had been abandoned on the other side of the Arkansas, whose overflow rendered all approach to it an impossibility.

Without a road to the Chickasaws, and without means of transportation, the French forces on the banks of the Mississippi saw themselves threatened with a more humiliating fate than befell those assembled on the banks of the Tombigbee. The safety, the inaccessibility of these enemies had received at their hands only a more brilliant proving than ever. Provisions were running low, the Indians were deserting, the French battalion was reduced to fourteen men, the grenadiers to twenty-eight men to a company.

Bienville and his officers held a council of war to decide how to end, with the least humiliation to the French arms, a situation becoming daily more critical and untenable.

The Chickasaws, on their side, had not been unim-

pressed by the great preparations against them. Despite the arms, ammunition, and volunteer aid from the English, and notwithstanding the tried strength of their forts, they had, from the first assembling of the French army on the Mississippi, begun to drop in the neighbourhood all the anonymous symbols and calumets current among Indians as amenities for peace. A letter had even been found from them, offering the return of three French prisoners in their possession, with whose good treatment they were convinced the French would be satisfied. Upon these hints, disdained at the time, the French commanders were now glad to act. The Northern Indians, who had been clamouring to be led against the enemy, but who had been restrained from policy, were given permission to march. On February 6 a party of five hundred, needing no made roads, immediately took their own paths through the woods to the Chickasaw villages. The French council sent with them the commandant of the Canadian forces, the *Sieur de Céloron*, and one hundred Canadians. *Céloron's* mission was, briefly, to allow the Indians to accomplish what they could against the Chickasaws ; but he was to receive any overtures of peace and bring about any negotiations which would bring the Chickasaws as suppliants to the French. He acquitted himself like the astute Canadian he was. His Indians flattered themselves they would surprise the villages ; but they found the Chickasaws thoroughly warned and on their guard, shut up in their strongholds, from which no demonstrations could entice them, save once or twice when they came out for a brief moment to display a white flag.

Céloron intrenched himself, and after allowing some days of skirmishing to his Indians, opened the desired negotiations. The French prisoners were returned, and the Chickasaw chiefs provided with sufficient guarantees to induce them to visit Fort Assumption ; but Céloron warned them that they would not be listened to unless they delivered up the Natchez. The Chickasaws, equal to this as to other occasions, replied that although they had bound and imprisoned their Natchez guests in order to deliver them, unfortunately some of their young men had loosed them, and all had escaped to the Cherokees except three.

At Fort Assumption there was no desire to prolong negotiations or force issues. The Chickasaw chiefs were made to appear in the eyes of the French Indians as the suppliants for peace ; they were reconciled with their Northern foes, but their quarrel with the Choc-taws was kept carefully alight. Their excuses for the escape of the Natchez were received without criticism, and the three devoted scapegoats for the nation handed over to the French savages. These, with a Natchez woman and three children, and four English traders captured and treated to a free voyage to France, constitute the net results of the gain of the war to the French, — unless, which might be taken into consideration, the several succeeding years of good conduct of the Chickasaws be attributed, not to their own needed repose after a strenuous effort, but to the effects upon their minds of the sight of the French resources, and the evidence of the commander's determination to apply them, had the forces of nature, which savages can respect, not been against him. During the latter part of March,

Bienville dismissed his allies, who took their departure north, west, and south. Destroying his depot at St. Francis River and his Fort Assumption, he himself set out for New Orleans on the 1st of April.

Bienville, in terminating his despatch to the minister, says all that could be said about his failure : " I feel with grief that your Highness will not be satisfied with this enterprise which has cost the king so much expense ; but I flatter myself at the same time that you will kindly observe that I did not neglect a single precaution necessary to render the campaign as glorious as his Majesty had reason to expect ;" relating the conjunction, in time, of all his reinforcements, his store of provisions, more than necessary, had it not been for the inevitable obstacles, his loss of cattle and horses. " At any rate, my Lord, if we have not come out of the affair with all the glory we had a right to promise ourselves, the glory of the king's arms has not suffered."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1741-1743.

BIENVILLE's sense of failure increased instead of diminishing, after his arrival in New Orleans. His discouragement seems to have sapped from his heart all the old optimistic verve that had vivified his devotion to the colony, — his colony, as he had some right to consider it. Far from maintaining, as of yore, his right and his sufficiency, as best man, to it, in its misfortunes as in its prosperity, he wrote to the minister, June 18, 1740: —

“The labour, the anxiety, and the trouble of mind which I have had to bear for the eight years during which it has pleased your Highness to maintain me in this government, have so enfeebled my health that I should not hesitate to supplicate you to give me leave to cross over to France by the first vessel of the king, if the interest of the colony and that of my reputation did not exact of me that I should put the finishing touches to the treaty of peace I have commenced with the Chickasaws, and which I do not think proper to hasten to a conclusion, in order to give the Choctaws time to avenge themselves upon the Chickasaws and their protectors for the insults they have received. This remainder of the war will only weaken the Choctaws the more, and disgust the English with trading with our tribes. It is thus, after having re-established peace and tranquillity in the colony, that I desire that it may

be permitted me to make a voyage to France to restore my exhausted health. I supplicate your Highness, therefore, kindly to ask permission of the king for me. I do not expect to be able to profit by it before the return of the vessel of 1742, and in case France does not take part in the war which is lighted in Europe."

There is no allusion in any of his reports or letters to the jealousies, piques, and contentions with which the engineer, Devergé, sought to excuse some of the unsuccess of the expedition. On the contrary, writing, so soon after his humiliation, of the promotions among the officers, he makes a moving plea that they be paid in bills of exchange, instead of in the vitiated card money of the colony: —

"Losses have fallen upon them, . . . which make their life so hard that it is not possible for them to maintain themselves here. . . . I supplicate his Highness to have some regard to the very humble prayer which I have the honour of making him. I know that the officers who have no plantations, however moderately they live, cannot sustain themselves without going into debt; and those who have plantations have difficulty in keeping even with their revenues."

! To his nephew, De Noyau, returning to France at his own expense, he pays the tribute, "that, naturally generous, he had, upon all occasions upon which he was commander, and principally in the last campaign, made expenditures so much above his salary that although he enjoyed a good revenue, he could not have made the voyage without the assistance of his friends."

While awaiting a response from the minister, the

Choctaws were, by degrees, brought into a more reliable union with the French than they had ever been, while their war against the Chickasaws was continued with a vigour and spirit that astonished the latter ; who, retailing their successful raids and skirmishes, declared that they now fought even better than the Chickasaws.

The year 1741 was another hard one for the colony. Two tornadoes in September swept away all the crops in the field, and destroyed all the magazines of provisions and the shipping along the Gulf coast and Delta. New Orleans and its environs alone escaped. The commandant at Mobile and De Soubois, "lieutenant du roi," described to the minister the dire straits of the colonists for food and shelter ; the latter in proof that the human mind never sees misfortunes come singly, — the deperdition of population, the fears of Indians, and the general insecurity felt by all, in Bienville's treaty with the Chickasaws.

The minister's response did not spare Bienville either for the abortionate campaign, the calamities of nature, or, what appeared as intolerable to him (presumably the cited deperdition of population), for the permission given by him for two families to pass over into the island of St. Domingo ; and he was told that he must find it agreeable to conform to the commands of his Majesty, which forbade, without royal orders, his allowing any inhabitant to leave the colony.

The desired permission to resign was not withheld, and during the two following years Bienville was occupied, as he said, in removing difficulties out of the path of his successor, — sending without intermission his Canadian-commanded Choctaws against the Chicka-

saws ; rooting out the remnants of Natchez still in the country ; bushwhacking the English traders and their caravans ; preparing his outposts to meet an attack of the English in case of war ; assisting Pensacola with cannon, and his intermediation to secure the neutrality of neighbouring Indians ; instructing Soubois, whom he expected to command in the interval between his departure and the arrival of his successor, in his Indian policy and management of the Choctaws, sending him to Mobile to make the yearly distribution of presents ; correcting abuses in the finances ; drawing up ordinances with Salmon, to prevent frauds in the tobacco ; writing a memorial upon the "wax-tree ;" and sending the reports of experiments and investigations made by Du Pratz and Alexandre, a botanist.

Soubois, completely reacting during the time from his former critical judgments, wrote, June, 1742, a handsome retraction and apology to the minister for it, with a long explanation of how his error came about, — through the reports of an ill-named "Bonnefoi ;" stating that he had made the same retraction to Bienville, to whom also he had communicated at the time his criticism on the Chickasaw peace.

Of the financial distress and scarcities of the colony, for which the minister held him responsible with Salmon, Bienville gave the simple explanation, March, 1741, —

"For some time past there has been speculating here in bills of exchange as in specie ; but either because it was not so public, or so considerable, it is only since my return from my last campaign that I have heard of several individuals using all the credit they have to obtain bills of exchange from France, and selling them to the merchants

here for card money, at a profit of fifty per cent. I am assured that on the departure of the last vessel some were sold at sixty per cent profit. I think Salmon could not have known of this abuse, or he would have promptly stopped it. However, it has had all the bad results it could have. Card money has fallen into as great discredit as 'bons' on the Treasury. . . . Everything that comes from France has risen to an exorbitant price, for the merchants . . . have to protect themselves. Every one has suffered except the speculators."

In taking cognizance of the matter, he protests that he has never been consulted about it, that none of the financial business of the colony had been communicated to him, and that he disagreed so completely with Salmon, who took the side of the speculators, that the latter would not set foot in his house. The scarcity of provisions came as much from the poor quality of provisions sent as from the lack of them; and as for the merchants of France appearing discouraged with trading with the colony, he had not seen a vessel arrive that had sold its cargo below one hundred per cent profit, and for the last eighteen months certain merchandise had brought four or five hundred per cent profit. "It is no longer doubtful but that this country will become flourishing," he asseverates, in spite of all unfavourable prognostics, and in the face of the complaining letters of Soubois. His difference with Salmon, lasting through the year, received the prompt admonition of the minister, for both participants denied the responsibility of it. Bienville, for his part of it, assured the minister that no spirit of bickering had come into the rupture, and that he had nothing to reproach himself with in this

regard ; "and if your Highness were informed of my conduct with this officer, you could reproach me only with too much complaisance and more consideration than was proper in my position." He had, however, sacrificed his resentment to the will of the minister, and had lent himself to all the propositions of reconciliation made by De Noyau, who had charged himself with the making up, and that he must say M. de Salmon had shown the same disposition.

In the same letter, March 26, 1742, recurring again to his Chickasaw compromise, and defending it, he evinces the continuation of his unmitigated sense of discouragement : —

"If success had always responded to my application to the affairs of this government, and to my zeal for the service of the king, I should willingly have consecrated the rest of my days to him ; but a species of fatality, for some time, pursuing and thwarting most of my best-concerted plans, has often made me lose the fruit of my labours, and perhaps a part of the confidence of your Highness in me. I have not thought, therefore, that I should strain myself any longer against my misfortune. I wish that the officer who will be chosen to succeed me may be happier than I."

His last demand upon the Government was, conjointly with Salmon, for a college for the colony, to be situated at New Orleans, — a demand which was refused.

The Marquis de Vaudreuil, his successor, arrived on the 10th of May, 1743, when Bienville took his departure from the colony, never more to see it. He had passed forty-four years working in it and for it. As a mark of favour, the Minister of Marine allowed him the bills of exchange asked for, in which to place the pro-

ceeds of the sale of his property. The fear of bearing too heavily upon the commerce, he said, had made him ask for only sixty thousand livres, which would be about the sum of his effects and a part of his negroes. He had decided not to sell his land at present, nor the rest of his negroes. His salary for the last term of his appointment was twelve thousand livres a year.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1765-1769.

OUT of the oblivion of his after life in Paris the figure of Bienville arises but once again into history, at the appeal of the colony which had learned to call him "Father." It is an episode which local traditions cherish, — a scene the imagination loves to represent.

Step by step the English had advanced in the progress of their domination of the New World. Step by step France had receded from the high-sounding "prises de possessions" of her explorers and pioneers; piecemeal by piecemeal the soil, wet with the blood of her martyrs to King and Church, had been thrown in to make good weight in European treaties.

The English flag floated over Canada; its presence formed a line of demarcation down the Mississippi, with the exception of New Orleans and the island, taking in all the territory to the east, and joining it to their Spanish acquisition in Florida. And by secret treaty, that which the English did not take, was ceded to Spain.

At Versailles, April 21, 1764, the king and his minister, De Choiseul, signed the instrument which instructed the Governor of Louisiana, Avadie, to make known to the colonists the fact of the donation to and acceptance by Charles III. of Spain of their country and themselves.

It seemed too incredible, even from a king of France, too base even from Louis XV. The colonists passed from their first state of consternation to one of deliberative reason. By a precocious intuition of the rights of a people, a large and notable assembly, composed of representatives from every parish, was held in New Orleans ; and to the orders of the king to Avadie, they responded, by unanimous resolution, with a petition from themselves to the king, — a petition heart-moving in its appeal not to be thrown out from their mother-country, not to be cut off from their ancestral allegiance.

Jean Milhet was deputed to take this petition to France and lay it at the foot of the throne. Arrived in Paris, Milhet sought out Bienville, — always, tradition relates, the eager recipient of news from Louisiana, and the most indignant mourner over its dismemberment.

The young ensign of the discovery of the Mississippi was then in his eighty-sixth year. The white-haired Canadian patriarch appeared with the young deputy before the courtesan's servitor who had penned it all away, — the great Mississippi river, valley, and delta, the long, unbroken line of Gulf coast, Iberville's great scheme, his own great colony, the city he had founded.

The chronicle merely adds that De Choiseul managed to prevent both them and their petition from coming under the eyes of the king, who, in his saturnalian orgies, far from remembering that he had ever had a Bienville, had forgotten that he ever possessed a Louisiana.

Bienville died in 1768, passing from his unknown home in Paris to his unknown tomb in Montmartre.

He was spared overliving the final passing of his colony, family, and friends under the Spanish yoke.

During Milhet's absence the colonists, with the blind faith of bigots in their king and country, refused recognition of Spanish authority, ordering the Spanish governor, Ulloa, and his ships away.

Milhet returned with the account of his fruitless efforts. The colony fell into the desperation that succeeds to hoping against hope. A wild, premature flutter for liberty broke out in their councils. Their talk, their speeches, rang with a tone which was afterwards to be qualified in history as "American." Armed preparations were being made. O'Reilly, the avenger of Ulloa and Spanish royalty, landed in New Orleans, July, 1769. On the 25th October following, six of the rebels, as they were called, were shot in the barrack yard. Among them was Bienville's grand-nephew, the young Jean Baptiste, commonly known as Bienville de Noyau. Six more were exported to Cuba and condemned to prison for terms varying from six years to lifetime. The twelve had their property confiscated. All the "chiefs and authors of the rebellion," as wrote Ulloa to Grinaldi, minister of Spain, were the children of Canadians who had followed Bienville to Louisiana, "and who had received so little education that they did not know even how to write, having come, with the axe on their shoulder, to live by the work of their hands."

BIENVILLE'S WILL, MADE IN 1765.

In the name of the Father, etc.

Persuaded, as I am, of the necessity of death, and of the uncertainty of the hour, I wish, before it arrives, to put my affairs in order. Firstly, I consign my soul to God. I wish to live and die in the bosom of the Church. I implore the mercy of God and of Jesus Christ, my Saviour. I ask the protection of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God, and of Saint John the Baptist, my patron saint, and of all the saints of paradise.

I give and bequeath to the poor of the parish in which I die, the sum of one thousand pounds, in one payment. I direct that three hundred masses be said for the repose of my soul, in such church as my testamentary executor may choose. I give and bequeath to the herein-named Venraine, called Picard, my valet, a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds during his life, if he be in my service the day of my death. Moreover, an agreement shall be made with him, by which he shall receive, by the payment of two hundred and fifty pounds, a life rental of the house I placed over his head. I further give and bequeath to him my wardrobe, consisting of all my personal apparel, such as coats, shirts. I further give him the bed and bedding on which he sleeps.

I give and bequeath to the herein-named Renaud, my cook, the sum of three hundred pounds, if she remain in my service till the day of my death.

I give and bequeath to the herein-named Maréchal, my footman, two hundred francs, to be paid at once, if he remain in my service till the day of my death.

I give and bequeath to the herein-named Marguerite, the girl who helps in the kitchen, sixty francs, if she remain in my service till the day of my death.

I declare that all my property is acquired, and that the little which I should have received from my father and mother was lost during my minority; for this reason, being free to dispose of my property in favour of whom I please, I wish by this will, as much as is in my power, to give to all of my nearest relatives marks of my friendship and liberality.

I give and bequeath to my nephew, Payau de Noyau, Seigneur de Charoy, in lower Normandy, son of my sister Le Moyne de Noyau, the sum of ten thousand pounds, to be taken from the share of my grand-nephew, Payau de Noyau, to whom I advanced a like sum of ten thousand pounds to buy a commission in the cavalry, and whose note I hold.

I give and bequeath to my nephew Le Moyne de Longueil, son of my eldest brother, Le Moyne de Longueil, a diamond worth fifteen hundred francs, to be paid at once.

I give and bequeath to my two grand-nieces, De Grandire de Larenaie [or Saranaie], who are daughters of my niece Le Moyne d'Iberville, who was daughter of my brother Le Moyne d'Iberville, each a diamond worth fifteen hundred pounds.

I make and institute my universal legatees for one fourth, my grand-nephew Le Moyne de Longueil, son of my nephew Le Moyne de Longueil, who is son of my eldest brother Le Moyne de Longueil; my nephew Le Moyne de Sérigny, younger son of my brother Le Moyne de Sérigny, for another fourth. My nephew Le Moyne de Chateauguay, who is the son of my brother Le Moyne de Chateauguay, for another fourth. And my grand-nephews Le Moyne de Sérigny de Loir, and their sister, children

of my nephew Le Moyne de Sérigny de Loir, for the last fourth.

I charge my said universal legatees to pay all my just debts, should I leave any, — I do not think I shall, — and to carry out all the provisions of this my present will.

I name as executor of this will my said nephew Le Moyne de Sérigny, younger son of my brother Le Moyne de Sérigny, praying and desiring him to execute my present will as containing my last wishes. To this end I revoke all other wills and codicils, this present one containing my last wishes.

Made, written, and signed by my hand in Paris the fifteenth of January, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.

LE MOYNE DE BIENVILLE.

On the margin : —

Registered in Paris, the fifteenth of April, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven.

Received : sixty-five pounds. — LANGLOIS.

I have forgotten in this will to make mention of my nephew Payau de Noyau, son of my sister Le Moyne de Noyau, to whom I give and bequeath a diamond worth fifteen hundred pounds.

Paris, the fifteenth of April, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.

LE MOYNE DE BIENVILLE.

Registered in Paris, April fifteenth, seventeen hundred and sixty-seven.

Received : thirteen cents. — LANGLOIS.

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